

CORNISH REVUE

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THE HOUSE THAT LISTENED	<i>C. C. Vyvyan</i>
TWO NEW POEMS	<i>A. L. Rowse</i>
INTIMATE LANDSCAPE	<i>Jack R. Clemo</i>
THE OLD QUARRY	<i>Frances Bellerby</i>
REFLECTIONS ON THE CORNISH "Q"	<i>R. Glynn Grylls</i> <i>E. W. Martin</i>
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THE MASON'S EPITAPH	<i>Ronald Duncan</i>
THE MERLIN THEATRE	<i>George Lambourne</i>
PAINTING IN CORNWALL	<i>David Cox</i>

Reproductions of Paintings and Sculptings

BEN NICHOLSON JOHN ARMSTRONG JOHN A. PARK
BARBARA HEPWORTH TOM EARLY SVEN BERLIN
W. BARNS-GRAHAM ALFRED WALLIS

EDITED BY DENYS VAL BAKER

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SPRING 1949

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COMMENTARY

THE first number of the *Cornish Review* appears some fifty years after the last issue of its very distinguished predecessor, the *Cornish Magazine*, edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. The earlier publication appeared at the dawn of a century that was to embrace huge social and industrial changes as well as two world wars. The later one takes its bow at the beginning of a half-century of equally momentous world developments. Inevitably the past fifty years have brought changes in the Cornish way of life, as one realizes looking through those early issues of "Q's" ambitious paper. Tin mining and fishing, two of the Duchy's staple industries, have suffered seriously from external competition. Many of the old crafts that were such a strong part of the county's tradition have dwindled or died out. Catering for holiday-makers, possibly now the Duchy's main industry, may have brought financial rewards but has only too often been responsible for the defacement of much natural beauty. Economically the county has, willy-nilly, become increasingly subject to the remote control of various London Government departments. Financially it has been classed by the Chairman of the Cornwall County Council as "a poor county", which has recently had to ask the bank to allow an overdraft limit up to £400,000. Unemployment is rising, and while there have been many plans for attracting new light industries to the county, few have yet been established.

These are material factors, however, and will sooner or later balance themselves. What matters most is the spirit of Cornwall, of the Cornish people and their culture: and this remains as strong and vital as in the days when "Q" wrote his first editorial in his study overlooking Fowey harbour. Cornwall is the same brooding, mysterious, otherworldly place, impregnated with a sense of age and eternity. The coastline is as beautiful as ever, the sea as unpredictable—one day booming over rocks and sands,

the next as calm as a sheet of glass, glittering with a blue of Mediterranean intensity. There is the same incomparable variety of countryside : from bleak Zennor moors to the lush valley of West Looe, from the harsh northern cliffs around Godrevy to the soft and wooded slopes of the River Fal, from the picture-book prettiness of Polperro to the stark ugliness of Pendeen or Camborne-Redruth industrial area. And the people remain in character. Though it is now more than one hundred and seventy years since the death of Dolly Pentreath, reputedly the last person to speak Cornish in everyday life, the Cornish accent remains unmistakable. So does the Cornish temperament, with all its faults and virtues—a truly Celtic temperament, imaginative, emotional, proud, suspicious, clannish.

It is with the Cornish people and their cultural activities, with Cornwall as a creative centre, that the *Cornish Review* is mainly concerned. For to-day, perhaps more than ever before, the creative arts are flourishing in Cornwall. In the field of the drama there are, or have recently been, repertory theatres at Falmouth, Penzance, Camborne, Newquay, and the Scilly Islands, while there are also numerous amateur dramatic ventures. Cornish musical activities include operatic, choral, orchestral, and brass band performances, many of which are broadcast by the B.B.C. The vitality of painting in Cornwall is reflected by permanent art exhibitions at St. Ives, Newlyn, Lamorna Cove, Falmouth, and Truro, and regular showings by leading Cornish artists at the Royal Academy and other London galleries. Some of the foremost craftsmen in Britain have their workshops in Cornwall—notably Bernard Leach, the potter, and Guido Morris, the printer, both at St. Ives, Archibald Carne, maker of ornamental hand-wrought ironwork, at Truro, and Francis Cargeeg, copper craftsman, at Hayle. And among more than one hundred authors living in Cornwall are many well-known novelists, poets, playwrights, and essayists.

Crafts, music, art, the drama, books—these are subjects that will be dealt with regularly in this magazine. So, also, will be Cornish industries, Cornish topography, Cornish archaeology, Cornish pastimes (such as wrestling), religion in Cornwall—in fact, anything and everything which is a part of, or which influences, the cultural life of the county. There will be “portraits” of various Cornish centres, such as the Lizard, Bodmin Moor, Sennen Cove, Falmouth, Morwenstow ; reproductions of photographs and paintings ; short stories and poems, as well as extracts from novels and plays ; studies of famous Cornish writers and artists.

At the same time, there exists no hard and fast rule as to the shape and character of the magazine ; it is better that this should be evolved out of experience. This first issue is intended to lay a tentative basis for future issues. But comment and suggestions for improvement will be welcomed by the Editor and taken advantage of wherever possible. For the future many contributions are already planned. Among the contents of the second issue will be "My Work as a Potter" by Bernard Leach, "The Western Rising" by Ashley Rowe, "Ornithology in Cornwall" by B. H. Ryves, "When I Went Down" by Frank Baker, "Broadcasting in Cornwall" by Gilbert Phelps, and "Charles Lee" by H. J. Willmott, also poems by Wallace Nichols, Vivian Locke Ellis, Terence Tiller, Gladys Hunkin, W. S. Graham, Rayner Heppenstall, and Bernard Moore, and reproductions of paintings by Dod Proctor, David Cox, Misomè Peile, Bryan Wynter, Ann Fearon Walke, and others.

The aim of the *Cornish Review* is to fulfil an obvious need—to provide a platform for discussing and analysing cultural activities in Cornwall, along with an outlet for new poetry and fiction by writers of Cornish descent or living in Cornwall. To continue to do this successfully the magazine needs contributors, subscribers, and advertising support. Without these, in good measure, no magazine can continue to function. Fifty years ago, for want of them, the *Cornish Magazine* ceased publication. If you feel after reading this issue of the *Review* that it is worthy of a better fate, then please give it every support and encouragement possible.

Although the daily use of the Cornish language had died out by the end of the eighteenth century, in recent years there has been a pronounced revival of interest, led by the researches of the late Henry Jenner, author of the *Handbook of the Cornish Language*. Since his death the work has been carried on and extended, notably by R. Morton Nance, President of the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, and author of *Cornish for All* and other booklets, and by "Caradar", A. S. D. Smith, Welsh bard and schoolmaster, who, turning to a study of the Cornish language, produced *Lessons in Spoken Cornish*, *Cornish Simplified* and, with Morton Nance, an *English-Cornish Dictionary*. In 1904 Cornwall was accepted as a member of the Celtic Congress, and in 1920 the first of a series of Old Cornwall Societies was formed, encouraging a learning of the language and a revival of Cornish culture. In 1928 there was held the first Gorsedd of the Bards of Cornwall, a ceremony similar to the Gorsedds of Wales and

Brittany. At the Gorsedds, which have now become an annual event, titles are conferred on Cornish men and women in recognition of some manifestation of the Celtic spirit in work done for Cornwall. Readers of this magazine, many of whom may have attended the 1948 Gorsedd at Camborne, will want to make a note of the date of the 1949 ceremony. At the invitation of the St. Austell Old Cornwall Society this will be held at Longstone, near Charlestown, on September 3rd. The Cornish service will be held in St. Austell Parish Church, by permission of Canon E. Roberts, the Vicar, on Sunday afternoon, September 4th.

Another, more immediate, occasion of interest to all Cornish people is the Inter-Celtic Festival, sponsored by the St. Ives Branch of the Gaelic League, and to be held at St. Ives during April. *Craobh Naaimh Ia : Connradh Na Gaedhilge*, as the St. Ives Branch of the Gaelic League is known in Gaelic, was formed in May 1948, and is the only branch in Britain west of a line drawn from Birmingham to London. Since its formation members of the branch have taken an active part in the Cornish Gorsedd, the Gaelic League Ard Feis at Birmingham last September, and the Cornish Celtic Congress, held at Truro last May.

The aim of the St. Ives Festival will be to recapture the national culture of the Celtic people ; the preservation and teaching of Celtic languages ; the popularization of the music, dances, games and industries of the Celt ; and the promotion of greater unity between the Celtic nations. Competitions will be held in Celtic music, literature, languages, dancing, and games. There will also be oral competitions in Gaelic, Welsh, and Breton. An open exhibition of crafts in Cornwall is being held, opened by John Farleigh, President of the Arts and Crafts Society, and Chairman of the British Craft Centre, at 3 p.m., Monday, April 25th, at the Catholic Hall, St. Ives. Craft sections include metal-work and jewellery, textiles, printing, woodwork, graphic reproduction, pottery, calligraphy, and ship models. The judges will be R. Morton Nance, Archibald Carne, Dalton Clifford, Mr. Schulhof, Alice Moore, Guido Morris, Robin and Dicon Nance, Bryan Wynter, Marion Grace Hocken, and Bernard Leach.

The Festival culminates in an all-Celtic Ceilidhe, with teams of visiting exhibition dancers, and the famous Helston Furry Dancers are performing the traditional Cornish dance. There will also be a special Festival Oration, and the playing of the anthems of the six Celtic nations, Cornwall, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Brittany, and the Isle of Man. Fuller details can be obtained from E. J. Curnow, "The Belyars", St. Ives.

The exhibition at the St. Ives Festival is only one of several indications of a revival of the crafts in Cornwall. The newly-formed British Craft Centre, which offers the advantages of a centralized distribution without interfering with craftsmen's freedom, provides an excellent opportunity for expanding export sales. Pottery is very much in demand, and Cornwall is particularly active in this field. In addition to the Leach Potteries at St. Ives, employing about a dozen people, there are at least a dozen potteries in various parts of Cornwall, including Truro, Bodmin, Lamorna, and Crowan, and the Penzance School of Art is running a very well-attended pottery training course. Bernard Leach will be writing about pottery in Cornwall in the next issue of the *Cornish Review*.

Another encouraging move has been the appointment by the Cornwall Council of Social Service of a Rural Industries Organizer. Recently a report was issued of a first survey which estimated that there must be well over four hundred separate craftsmen still at work in the county. In the opinion of the organizer prospects for pottery and thatching, a supreme example of the traditional family craft, are very good. In some crafts adaptation to new demands has become essential. Wherever possible the Council, through what is called a Rural Industries Loan Fund, is endeavouring to help craftsmen to obtain essential new equipment. In addition technical officers and demonstrators are visiting craftsmen and giving them advice and training. Any craftsmen interested should get in touch with the Rural Industries Bureau, 6 Strangeways Terrace, Truro.

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Painting is so popular in Cornwall as to be almost an industry in itself. The story is familiar, and was outlined by the late Stanhope Forbes in an issue of the *Cornish Magazine*, of how at the end of the last century a number of Impressionist painters, settling first in Newlyn, and later overflowing to St. Ives, set the fashion for Cornwall as a painter's centre. Since then most well-known English painters have at least visited Cornwall, and many have stayed permanently. Each year the galleries at Newlyn and St. Ives continue to attract hundreds of visitors. There is certainly nowhere else in England, outside London, where art galleries could present so much work by local artists. In recent years the glory of the Newlyn School seems to have transferred to St. Ives, although this is no reflection on such fine painters as Charles Simpson, Dod Proctor and Mary Jewell, over at Newlyn. It is in St. Ives, too, that there has gradually

emerged the inevitable cleavage between the traditional and modern painters. It is a cleavage that constantly occurs in all fields of art. Inevitably it causes a conflict, and this now appears to have happened at St. Ives. As reported in the Art Notes on page 80, seventeen members of the St. Ives Society of Artists have resigned and set up a new organization, to be known as the Penwith Society of Arts in Cornwall. A glance at the list of members shows that, as a whole, the new Society represents the modern and younger painters—although it is significant that such eminent older artists as Bernard Leach, Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth and Leonard Fuller are among the foundation members.

It is recognized by most art critics, and proved by the history of painting, that true art achieves its purpose no matter how presented, whether "modern" or "traditional". Labels are confusing, and encourage a dangerous black-and-white mentality. To the traditional school of painters in St. Ives the less orthodox, sometimes abstract, work of their younger contemporaries seems distorted and ugly. They should be able to recognize the integrity of this work, even if unable to comprehend its purpose. The same advice might be given to some of the younger painters who dismiss as photographic traditional painting that is often of great sensitivity. A more positive approach would be a recognition that both schools of painting have much to give Cornwall, just as Cornwall has much to give them. In fact, as David Cox points out in an article on page 80, there is a strong link between the different types of artists. That link is "an aesthetic value—an expression of an element of Cornwall". The lovely landscapes of John Park, the abstracts of Ben Nicholson, the sculpting of Sven Berlin or the pottery of Bernard Leach—it should not be difficult to perceive in the work of each of these artists the same subterranean influence of Cornwall, its mystery and its inspiration. The best conclusion of the present controversy among the painters of St. Ives would be a determination on the part of all to apply themselves to their painting more imaginatively, more seriously, than ever before.

As will be seen from this issue, the drama plays an important part in Cornish life. The Cornish, like all Celtic races, have always been attracted to acting, and at one time the old miracle and mystery plays were a familiar event. It is only recently that serious attempts have been made to revive these, but by now many people are familiar with Morton Nance's play, *An Balores*, or *The Chough*, and with Peggy Pollard's *Bewnans*

Alysaryn, a clever adaptation of the old mystery play technique. It is to be hoped that local societies will give increasing attention to performing works about their own people rather than performing safe but often hackneyed West End successes. Meanwhile the *Review* extends every good wish to such local organizations as the Merlin Theatre, about which George Lambourne writes in an article on page 76, the Cornish Shakespearean Festival and the various repertory companies. The plans of some of these are outlined in the Theatre Notes. Until a few years ago there were no repertory companies practising regularly in Cornwall. Some very good spadework was done by the Adelphi Players, who toured plays by Ibsen, Shaw and Bridie to Camborne, Penzance, St. Ives, Falmouth, Bodmin, and other centres. Their successors, faced with the hazardous task of making repertory pay in Cornwall almost all the year round, have tended to play for safety in the selection of plays. It has to be admitted, from any experience of commercial theatre production in Cornwall, that public support tends to decrease in opposite proportion to any rise in the level of intelligence in the plays performed. Even so, it is difficult to estimate how much this is merely an automatic reaction, which might well be overcome by persistence. At any rate, perhaps the programme listed by the new company at Newquay may be an augury of better things to come in general.

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Music in Cornwall will be the subject of a future article by W. D. Pearson, County Music Organizer. The Cornish are very musical, particularly in the vocal field, and Cornish choirs are perhaps only second in renown to those of the Welsh (that is not to admit second place in quality!). Some of the best singing heard last year was at the annual Eisteddfod, organized by members of Wesley Chapel, Camborne. Another great annual event is the annual Cornwall Music Competition Festival. This year the 40th Festival will be held at St. Austell during the week beginning May 18th.

Many of Cornwall's musical entertainments are organized by the Arts Council, which was responsible in 1948 for visits by the Boyd Neel String Orchestra, several well-known pianists, and the St. James Ballet Company. Music is only one of several arts which the Council, through its Western Regional Organization at Bristol, brings to the people of Cornwall. Plans for the 1949 season are to be settled at the end of April at a Regional Conference of Associated Arts Societies from all over the West-country,

including the following seven Cornish organizations : Falmouth Three Arts Committee (Mrs. Maitland, 5 Woodland Crescent, Falmouth—Telephone 1132) ; Liskeard Arts Council (Mrs. Cornish, Rosslare, Barras Cross, Liskeard—Telephone 2221) ; Newquay Society of Arts (Miss H. M. Harry, 13 Arundel Way, Newquay—Telephone 2169) ; St. Austell Society (A. M. Olsson, Esq., St. Benets, Tywardreath, Par—Telephone 157) ; St. Ives Society for the Advancement of Music and the Arts (E. W. Colwell, Esq., Fernlea Terrace, St. Ives—Telephone 313) ; Truro Three Arts Society (Mrs. W. M. Bennetts, The Carlton Hotel, Truro—Telephone 254011) ; and the Wadebridge and District Society of Arts (Miss Barbara Gibbs, Crenaway, Fernleigh Road, Wadebridge—Telephone 274).

Full details of the Arts Council plans, which include the formation of regional art exhibitions to be sent to various Cornish centres, as well as numerous theatre and musical tours, will be given in an article by J. Wood Palmer, Assistant Regional Director of the Arts Council, in the next issue of the *Cornish Review*.

The object of this and future commentaries is to give a quick but comprehensive survey of latest cultural developments in Cornwall. Where possible constructive criticism is made, and if a larger consideration is necessary this will probably be found in one of the articles that follow. For the future the Editor would be glad to receive regular programmes from secretaries of arts societies and other organizations concerned with Cornish life. Many of the latter are, of course, outside the Duchy, for there are thousands of Cornish people living away, in London and other parts of Britain, as well as in America, Canada, South Africa, etc. It is hoped in the near future to publish a special article about these Cornish exiles. In the meantime the Editor sends to them all a warm greeting, and hopes that the *Cornish Review* may prove yet another link between them and their beloved home county. In concluding, a special word of thanks is due to Mr. J. M. St. Aubyn, General Secretary, and other Members of the London Cornish Association, for so kindly assisting in bringing this publication to the notice of Members.

THE EDITOR.

CORNISH CULTURE

R. MORTON NANCE

I SHALL take it that there is a difference between Culture in Cornwall and Cornish Culture. Of the former there is much to be said. With its dramatic and musical life, and the many artists and writers who make Cornwall their home, we may claim to have no ordinary share of cultural amenities here. But it is only to a very small extent that we can connect these with any indigenous tradition of culture, and leaving them aside, I should prefer to search for something like a continuous tradition of culture that is natively Cornish.

We have still with us things visible and invisible to remind us of very ancient cultures in Cornwall. Every common granite field-hedge formed of stones cleared from the land it encloses has in its great "grounders" and its well-adjusted smaller fragments some suggestion of the pre-Celtic raisers of megaliths or the builders of Celtic hill-forts and British villages, and this is not lost even in the masonry tradition of recent times, with its preference for great masses of stone to form doors and windows rather than using small units. To a Celtic culture, at least, we can trace our choice of long-hilted "showls" rather than Saxon crutch-handled ones, such a treatment of the soil as "beat-burning", or the tiny hamlets or isolated farms which spread in Celtic fashion over a Cornish landscape instead of gathering themselves into large villages and leaving houseless tracts between, in the usual Saxon way. Some of our customs, such as that of midsummer bonfires, and old beliefs, as in the curative properties of certain wells, are likely to be pre-Celtic as well as pre-Christian in their origin, giving us here and there some slender thread of continuity which has survived the fabric of a lost culture to which they belonged.

The whole known history of Cornwall accounts far more readily for gaps in tradition than for anything continuous. The Celtic influx caused the non-Aryan language of an older people to vanish without a trace to be identified, even from the place names of Cornwall, which implies a very thorough break with the past. The effect of a very partial Roman occupation was slight as compared with that, introducing a few Latin words into the Celtic speech, but not ousting this language as it seems to have done in most parts of Britain, and scarcely affecting Cornish place names at all. Neither were these at first affected except over a comparatively small area by the later Saxon invasions.

Some of the Cornish words from Latin are due to Church influence rather than to Roman rule, like *pronter* [priest] from *provendarius*. It may be that Christianity came to Cornwall before the Romans left Britain, and has remained here ever since, but we learn from one of the few authentic lives of saints, that of St. Samson of Dol, that even in the seventh century pagan worship of stones was practised, since he interrupted such a ceremony while crossing the Bodmin Moors as an overland break in the sea journey from South Wales to Brittany. His cutting of a cross on the worshipped rock rendered it thenceforth proper to pay it such reverence. This was in line with the dedication of venerated wells to saints and the Christianizing of midsummer fires by dedicating them to St. John the Baptist, both of which may be taken also as bridging the gap between pagan and Christian cultures.

The fact that, as for St. Samson, sea passages were shortened by avoiding the Land's End route in going from other Celtic lands to Brittany, had much influence on the religious culture of Cornwall in the Dark Ages. Saints from Wales, Ireland, and Brittany came to know Cornwall and founded cells or small monastic enclosures here, giving their own names to the places, either alone or prefixed with "Saint" or following such words as *Lan*[enclosure]*eglos* [church], *chapel*, *merther* [martyr], *porth* [landing-place], *bod*, or *bos* [dwelling], and *plu* [parish], the last much commoner while Cornish was still in use. The personalities behind such names had usually become quite forgotten by the time their legends were prepared to be read on their feast days, and, as Canon Doble warned us, in such "lives" names and sexes were mixed up, birthplaces and family details were invented and miraculous deeds were supplied from stock, often with grotesque anecdotes to season them, so that the actual history to be learnt from them needs expert sifting from the fiction.

Far many more Cornish place names contain the personal names of men of whose lives we have not even a fictitious account. These are the only memorials of the secular great men, founders of the first Celtic homesteads or hill-forts, whose British names have *car* [fort], *tre* [homestead], *bod* or *bos* [dwelling] as the commonest prefixes before them. It is only to be believed that for some generations at least tales of these great ones would be handed down, but unless they later became mixed up in folklore with giants, as some of the saints certainly did, there has been here another terrible break with tradition, and scarcely one modern inhabitant of a place with such a name as Carveddras, Tregassick, or Tremellick would know that he owes its existence to some ancient Modred, Cadoc, or Maeloc. Still less could a place called now "Crumplehorn" recognize itself as Tre-Maelhorn, though in Elizabeth's reign it was still at least Tremblehorne. Such names, especially as Anglicized, are often terrible puzzles to us all, yet they may throw light on the darkest places in our history at least as well as the saint's names, when they find their own Doble to sort them out. The reading of a saint's legend or a miracle-play about him kept the holy man in mind, but can we assume that hero-tales paid similar tribute to the secular great? Whether they were written in verse or handed on orally in prose, there seems no doubt that we can, for the Breton scholar Loth has shown that one of the finest tales of all, that of Tristan and Yseult, was first put into French from a tale told with all the circumstance that accurate topography could give it of actual places in Cornwall, and thus originated here. Whether the tale was one among many, and whether we had Cornish bards to versify such romances, we can only ask, but it seems likely enough that we had here a Celtic culture like those of Wales or Brittany, to which such romances would be a necessity. That they should pass without leaving a trace is less difficult to believe than that all our Celtic folk-songs and music of a much later period should have perished as completely as we know they did. During the earliest Middle Ages Cornwall and Brittany had what was still a common language and culture, with Cornwall as the parent country, so that other tales of the Arthurian cycle gathered by French authors in Brittany could well have originated here.

It was in West Cornwall and in the fifteenth century and early sixteenth that we had the most evident approach to a native Cornish culture—a reflection, no doubt, of the common European culture, but moulded by its surroundings so as to take a very local turn. This is most obvious in the very Cornish use of granite and oak in our adaptations of contemporary styles in stone and wood-work which are still seen in most of our churches,

but even more evident is it in the surviving remnant of manuscripts written in Cornish. All with a religious intention, these allow little scope for originality in their authors, but advantage is taken of opportunities to localize their detail by introducing Cornish place names and to lend life to incidents by expanding the bare story.

The language of them is a later development of the ancient British that was common to Brittany and Cornwall, and, like the contemporary English, had adopted many words from Anglo-French as adornments. The bulk of these writings takes the form of mystery plays for open-air performance in the parish *plen an gwary*, or playing-place, on feast days, and it suggests a high general level of culture that the standing audience were expected to gather the sense of an occasional scrap of English or French as well as their rather refined Cornish. The then Anglicized half of Cornwall had no playing-places and, presumably, no plays like these, and it is probable that West Cornwall owed all these works—Passion poem and plays that survive and far more that has vanished—to the good monks of Glasney at Penryn. One good reason for believing this is the introduction into the most important set of these plays of local place names of that district.

Besides place names our mystery plays give us hints of such non-scriptural beings as the mermaid [*morvoren*] and the hobgoblin [*bucca nos*], but it is in the miracle-play *Life of Meryasek* that we get what is most to our purpose—a hint of a continuous tradition from the days of Arthurian tales. The manuscript is mainly in the attractive handwriting of a priest named Ralph Ton, who signed it as finished by him in 1504,¹ but the first ten pages are in another hand, which may be that of its author, as Thurstan Peter suggests, John Nans, the then parson at Camborne, whose church was dedicated to Meryasek and who had been trained at Glasney. The author has used the Latin Life of the Breton saint Meriadec, who never came to Cornwall, and either joined to it incidents that belong to the Life of another—Cornish—saint of the same name (in Latin Meriadocus) who was associated with Camborne, or else invented all the Cornish part. A point in favour of the latter view is that the play itself admits that there were no relics of the saint at Camborne, an unlikely thing if there had been a local Meriadocus. As in the reputed Lives of some other Cornish saints, a usurping “tyrant”, Teudar, is Meryasek’s persecutor in the play. In a scene where this heathen chief, who has

¹ His name, Radulphus Ton, has been misread as “Hadton” and “Nad Ton”. Richard Ton, Curate of Crowan, 1537, seems likely to have been related to him.

strongholds as Lesteadar, "Teudar's Court", and at Goodern's Roman camp, is about to give battle to the lawful Christian Duke of all Cornwall, unnamed, whose headquarters, like those assigned traditionally to King Arthur, are Castel au Dynas and Tintagel, following the convention usual in mystery or mumming play battles, he begins with big talk and threatens: "King Alwar, and Pygys, noble King Mark, as well as a king called Casvelyn, are coming to me with assistance".

That such names, thought of as those of petty kings in Cornwall, should still have been familiar in 1504 seems to imply that semi-historic traditions, such as we have guessed at, did exist, even if unwritten. Again, attached as an interlude to Meryasek is a play taken from the medieval "Miracles of the Blessed Mary", and acted in honour of Mary of Camborne, whose chapel preceded Meryasek's church. Much new detail is added to the tale "The Woman's Son", as usually told, in order to localize it in Cornwall, and amongst other things the son is made to enter the service of a Cornish king, Massen, this time a Christian, who fights a nameless devil-worshipping "tyrant". His name suggests a lingering tradition of Maximus, the Macsen Wledig of Wales, a slender thread of continuity from Romano-British culture.

Such mystery or miracle plays were acted in Cornwall until the Civil War put an end to such pleasures. The latest manuscript of one in existence was transcribed by one William Jordan in 1611, and has full stage directions for an actual performance. This—"The Creation of the World with Noah's Flood"—uses bits of the fifteenth-century Creation play, and 1540 would be a likely date for the rest, apart from some possible re-spelling. By 1611, if we can take Richard Carew's funny story of a volunteer actor in one as typical, performers in such plays were no longer expected to learn their parts (we have a written-out actor's part to show that in the fifteenth century they did), but only to say aloud what the "ordinary" spoke softly behind them. Carew's gentleman brought the play to a close in bursts of laughter by repeating, instead of the ordinary's words, his curses against the fool who would not say them. Carew, as a Cornishman of the non-Celtic fringe, would have only a slight curiosity about Cornish, but we can forgive this lack when we think of the rest of his wonderful *Survey of Cornwall*, which gives us such a picture of life in the county in Elizabeth's time. If miracle plays were thus crudely acted then, they had much more time to degenerate for lack of help from the clergy before Dr. William Borlase saw the last relics of them in the "miserable dialogues from Scripture" that in his youth were taken

round from house to house with the mumming-play of St. George at Christmas. This tradition of acting, however, gave guise-dance plays in Cornwall an importance that they did not get elsewhere. By 1800 Scripture subjects had given way to local folk-lore, but "Duffy and the Devil" was a versified play in several acts, as Bottrell and Hunt's extracts show, and another, "Tom and the Giant Blunderbore", was known though its doggrel lines are lost. Probably there were many more; some improvised, others versified by the best rhymester of the village, schoolmaster or otherwise.

In spite of shattering breaks with tradition during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we find Scawen writing his *Dissertation on the Cornish Tongue* after the Restoration with a very decided wish to keep intact such links as Cornwall still had with its Celtic past. Still more do we find this wish inspiring Nicholas Boson of Newlyn, who was modestly writing at about the same time "improving" stories and recording folk-lore in Cornish for his own children, a forerunner of all who have since gathered up the fragments of popular culture in West Cornwall, of whom William Bottrell, "the Old Celt", is chief. Such men, like the old wandering entertainers of whom Hunt and Bottrell tell us, were surely in the direct line descended from the bards of ancient Cornwall. Most of Boson's work can only be surmised from extracts made by the Welsh antiquary Edward Lhuyd, to whom they were sent, but we have one of his folk-tales, "John of Chyanhorth", intact, all in Cornish; a fanciful "Duchess of Cornwall's Progress", in Cornish and English, only part of which remains, showing that the imaginary progress was the pretext for a little survey of the popular antiquities of the Land's End district, and a Cornish essay, *Nebes Geryow adro dhe Gernewek* [A Few Words about Cornish].

It was about this time, too, that John Keigwin was trying to understand the fifteenth-century Cornish manuscripts, and so became the recognized head of a group of local antiquaries and amateurs of the Celtic language that was becoming less and less spoken by the illiterate fisherfolk and country people to whom it had long been relegated. It is to these enthusiasts that we owe most of our knowledge of the latest Cornish, as preserved in the Gwavas and Tonkin MSS. or later printed by Pryce and Davies Gilbert. There was certainly a little centre of native Cornish culture around the shores of Mount's Bay just then, from 1660 to 1730.

As the eighteenth century went on it may be that Dr. William Borlase, with his works on the Antiquities and Natural History of Cornwall, turned the thoughts of his neighbours towards speculations about Druids

and researches into local history and biology, the latter following up the work done by Ray and Willughby in Cornwall in the previous century, so that popular traditions and linguistic diversions ceased to attract. Borlase compiled a Cornish vocabulary, but recorded no spoken Cornish, and we have no saying of Dolly Pentreath save one from late folk tradition, and should have had no Cornish from William Bodinar if he had not been able to write a letter in it in 1776. Dr. Pryce printed the collected work of others only ; nothing of his own. The break between the Celtic enthusiasts of the beginning of the century and the cultured Cornishmen of its end was thus a wide one.

Coming to the nineteenth century, we reach a period when general culture in Cornwall was expanding greatly along with the scientific, engineering, and mathematical studies that were encouraged by the prosperity of Cornish mining. To this period we owe the beginnings of our Cornish learned societies, and Penzance, Sir Humphrey Davy's birthplace, became a little centre of seaside fashion as well as, with its Library and societies, one of learning. To mention even the books that were written on all manner of Cornish subjects by local authors during the nineteenth century would fill pages. Cornish culture, in my restricted sense, was not neglected either. Popular traditions and local dialect, including surviving words of Cornish, were well looked after by Bottrell, Hunt, and Miss M. A. Courtney or Dr. Jago. Davies Gilbert had even printed some Cornish texts for the first (and worst) time in 1826-7, though the new knowledge of Cornish among a few Cornishmen was due rather to the work of non-Cornish scholars : Norris, Williams, and Stokes. With the twentieth century came Henry Jenner's work to arouse interest in the language as well as the ancient history of Cornwall, Charles Henderson's researches into Cornish documents, and Canon Doble's investigations to enlighten us about the Age of the Saints which Canon Taylor had already made more alive for us. As with all these, Cornwall has usually been fortunate in inspiring friendship and co-operation among its workers, and it was easy to add many others to form a Cornish Gorsedd in 1928 that should foster especially what I have called Cornish Culture, and keep alive in Cornwall whatever is most Cornish and most Celtic. More workers constantly come and give their help, but always there will remain plenty for them to do in gaining, instead of that vague feeling of living in a land haunted by a forgotten past, some sense of belonging to a very long series of cultures none of which is quite as hopelessly lost, perhaps, as we used to think.

THE HOUSE THAT LISTENED

C. C. VYVYAN

I KNEW that house was listening. It stared like a face with no eyelids and the strange thing was that standing there beneath those watchful windows I was immediately lost in time and space, unconscious of any hinterland or any outlet to that place. Standing before the derelict house, I felt as one feels on receiving unexpected bad news, a physical sense of being rooted to the spot ; to people who do not naturally express themselves by cries or gestures, this sense may have a queer, tingling agony.

My arrival here was, as I have suggested, a matter outside my ken. Often I would wander without purpose, going wherever my feet led me, though actually in such a mood of reverie when the questing mind is at rest and some deeper part of one's being is awakened, the feet do not take charge, rather is one led by some magnetic force like that which draws the needle to the north. Well, here I was, looking down on an unknown valley, wooded, steep, apparently bottomless, full of twists and turns, shaped like an S or Z, and forested all the way to the lower end, where two interlocked spurs shut out the world. The heavy green of the oaks, the mystery of the unseen bottom only served to reinforce the heavy impression made by the house.

I knew that if ever a valley had been gifted with any of the human senses this one was thus gifted, for it was listening intently.

I found myself alert and watchful as those two confederates, drawn by them into some charmed circle wherein my whole being waited with intentness, though what it was that I awaited and whether hope or fear had taken possession of me I could not possibly have told either you or myself. The stillness of the valley and the house remained unbroken ;

it was a stillness like that of night, or something frozen, or of thought immediately before creation. Yet that stillness was no longer a menace to my own normal manner of existence, for I had become a part of it and had ceased to wonder why nothing came from outside or within to split that silence.

Yet some awareness I must have kept of that other world which I had left outside this overwhelming sense of quietude, for I was looking about me making observations, noting how in this mass of untended vegetation there were intertwining creepers that were strange in England, and unfamiliar trees, and exotic shrubs that stole the light of day from each other.

While I was gazing at this derelict garden I became aware of a strange sound, reiterated and hollow, coming from the other side of the wall of leafage. I started forward, as if to ward off some intruder from a haunt that had already become my own habitation, and in that moment of surprise I was released from my absorption into the spirit of the house and valley. Thus, regaining consciousness of my accustomed self, I was able to register something with a horrid intellectual certainty peculiar to my own lost world, a certainty fraught always with experience or intention and alien to this half-dreaming state, alien to the timeless passivity of the deserted place.

I knew that just on the other side of that tangle of green leaves somebody was digging graves, *and my own grave was among them.*

At first the sounds were dull and heavy, with a strange hollowness that held more terror than any cry; but after a while they became sharper, and I could almost feel the actual contact of metal on stone. How can I describe the horror of those moments? It was as if every movement of the spade handled by that unseen digger struck on my sensitivity, not as if I were watching the movements or hearing the sounds, but as if I myself were the earth that was being hollowed out, the stones that were being loosened, the pit now yawning in that quiet place. Then there came a silence that was far more horrible than any sound, and in that silence I knew that the unseen digger was resting on his spade, looking down into the grave that he had dug for me.

Whether I actually swooned and then came to and started running for my life, I do not know; a period of complete black-out supervened, and when I recovered consciousness of my own movements I was running, under the compulsion of some blind, unreasoned impulse of escape. I did not dare to look over my shoulder, I ran with a swiftness never achieved

before nor since, for I knew that the silence of the house and valley held some secret which was even now sending out magnetic currents to draw me in again. I knew that the ghostly sexton was waiting as he leaned upon his spade for my return, that he might finish his work.

That experience took place long ago, and gradually the mental picture of the house, the valley and the gravedigger lost some of its sharpness, settling down into the rather flattened-out world of memory.

Yet always, underlying that memory, I had a conviction that some day the meaning of those ghastly sounds breaking in on the immobility of that deserted place would be made clear to me, and this conviction persisted, despite the fact that I had no occasion to return to the West-country. Until one day, when I found myself planning a walking tour with an old friend in order to distract his mind from a recent loss. He it was who settled on Cornwall for our expedition, deciding to leave out the inland country of my previous wanderings and to follow the coast-line in search of certain rare wild flowers.

Day after day we walked, and usually came in every twenty miles or so to a fishing village or some little inn beside the sea, but one afternoon we found ourselves on a lonely stretch of uninhabited coast, and having consulted our map, turned inland and followed a footpath that led in the direction of a village marked plainly as Bospolvans. It led, beside a stream, into a deep wood of oaks and ash and sycamore. Twisting and turning in a green twilight, the path led finally across one stile and another into open fields with, just ahead of us, a beautiful church tower, ancient, squat, and grey. As we drew near the cemetery wall our path turned leftward, and then, passing through a kissing-gate, we found ourselves in a new world of scent and colour.

"*Pittosporum tobira*!" exclaimed my friend, looking with rapture at a shrub that bore waxy flowers like orange blossoms. "Old walls and the blue Mediterranean", he murmured. "Ragusa, Cattaro, the south of France!"

While I was gazing at a mass of orange azaleas set against a white rhododendron, he had darted forward and was pointing at a tangle of dull green festooned about the lower limbs of a dead tree.

"You might be in New Zealand", he said. "This is *Muhlenbeckia*!"

His face was lit up as I had not seen it for many weeks. The path twisted as if to make way for a tall white *Leptospermum*, tunnelled beneath

some gigantic laurels, and then brought us face to face with a house that was bathed in sunshine. There were flower-beds beneath the windows, and the sound of children's voices came from within.

"I could do with something to drink," said my companion, "it looks a friendly house", and he advanced to the front door. As he rang the bell I turned to look at the valley from which we had come and my heart stood still.

I had seen it all before.

There was the wooded valley, shaped like an S or Z, ending in those two interfolded shoulders, there was the tangle, now well cared for, of exotic plants; but the old blank-faced house was newly painted and there were now bright curtains behind each window. I was feeling numb when I turned to find a tall, fresh-faced woman of forty or so smiling at my friend. She was bare-legged with yellow sandals, and she wore a deep blue cotton overall with a scarlet leather belt, and her dark hair was cut short.

"Come in," she said, "the kettle's on!"

She might have been Hebe, so upright and youthful was her figure, and her voice was like a benediction. We sat down to tea in the spacious kitchen with Hebe and her five children, and as the westering sun fell on her face I thought I had never seen a form so perfect in poise, nor eyes that reflected such serenity.

"Orlando won't be back from market yet awhile", she remarked, and something in the lilt of her voice when she said "Orlando" told us that he was the pride of her life. When my friend began to praise the garden, a strange dark look came into her face. "They be some of old Squire's leavings, they bushes", she said, with an air of finality, and when we tried to pursue the subject she looked significantly at the children and kept silence. Presently, when the five had scattered, rising like a covey of birds and hurrying out to the back yard, my friend returned to the topic of the garden.

"And who was old Squire?" I added. "Please do tell me now. I—well, I came here once before, many years ago, and I always longed to know the history of this place. It was empty then, and it was rather sad, but you have changed it, and now it is all beautiful. I don't even know its name."

"Rosenithon", she said, and gave me one searching glance, as if to see if I were found wanting. Apparently she satisfied herself, for she folded her arms and leaned back a little in her high-backed chair and began her story.

She and Orlando came to live there seven years ago come Michaelmas ; the house had been empty for many years. Oh no, it was not haunted, but it had seen unhappy things in its day. Old Squire was not a rich man, but he was no beggar, and there was not any need to leave his wife and all those children living like that, and the place tumbling to pieces about them. Some said he was queer-like, but then, most folks are queer in one spot or another, you've only got to touch the spot. Why, Orlando, he turns pale as death if he's given rabbit to eat ! Howsomever, there it was. Squire used to go journeys to foreign parts, taking all the money with him, and what did he have to show for it when he came back ? A few packets of old seeds. Then he would bide home a while and raise queer plants in the garden, plants no good to man, woman, nor child. He had done this always, and when he married, and a sweet, pale creature she was, quiet as a mouse, then he couldn't break himself of the habit. To-day he would be in America, and next week in Australia or Japan. For the first few years he did bide home a while, but it seemed like as if some devil was calling him over the seas, and presently he up and off again, leaving her with five little girls. They do say he wanted a son, and when the twins were born after the first three disappointments, he went off round the world, leaving her to get on so well as she could. They were all born healthy, but nothing ever went right with those poor children, some said the valley was too green, damp like a hot-house, some said the house was too whisht and lonely. Howsomever, the twins just faded away, and they were in the burial ground before they were twelve months old. Maybe they were short of food too, the neighbours did what they could, but, all the same, folks reckoned they lived a bit near the bone, and that's no good for a lonely woman, and then the Squire's missus was one who never told her troubles.

Oh no, she and Orlando never found it lonesome, why should they ? Anyways, one by one those children took sick, and time came when they were all in the churchyard in a row, you can see the tombstones now. Yes, he did come home at last, and gave up his roving, but by that time his missus was no more than a shadow, always talking to herself, and she didn't do more than just live to see him. Soon as ever he'd set up the big tombstone alongside the little ones he was off again, and the last ever

heard of him the captain of some strange foreign ship sent home his watch and papers. No one would go near the house for a brae while, and the rain began to come through the roof, but Orlando had always liked the place, and watched over it so well's he could as he worked on the neighbouring farm.

"We came here so soon as we were married," she added, "and at first we had a struggle, I don't deny it. And we had some job letting in the sunshine. Would you like to see them graves?"

She ended the story suddenly, rising from her chair, and we followed her out to the churchyard and stood there, we three in the evening sunlight, looking down on those six headstones. There lay Ellen-Jane and Jenefer, Maud, Kezia, and Caroline-Salome and, beside them, "Joy, Beloved Wife of Nathaniel Lugg, Squire of this Parish".

Hebe left us with a warm "Come again and welcome", and we lingered a while wandering about the garden. I stood still for a moment beside those flaming azaleas, and as the silence began to hum in my ears I heard, or thought I heard, the ghostly echo of a spade digging earth. But the next moment a clamour broke out behind the house, the sound of a car arriving, the gobbling of turkeys, and children's voices raised in shrill excitement.

We turned away towards Bospolvans and crossed those fields over which I had hurried long ago, afraid to cast one glance behind me. But we were walking slowly now, and although those happy sounds from the farmyard followed us in the still evening air, all echo of the ghostly digger at his work had died away.

Cornish Poem

THIS place I have excluded from my heart :
Yet it steals back along the secret channels
Of memory. There is the unforgettable
Unforgotten smell of the sea wind
In the woodland the way the road goes to Trenarren,
The hart's tongue ferns curled in the moss of the hedge,
The turning to the sea where once my eyes were blinded
By the glory of gorse—Moses' burning bush
I heard about as a child at church—the sea
Breaking into flowers upon the rocks
My eyes ache to see three hundred miles
Away. There it all is awaiting me
In the blown breath of the bells over the hill.
I have only to whisper the word my heart breaks
To say, that now shall never be said by me.
Yet wherever two or three of them shall be
Gathered together, they shall remember me :
I shall always be the one who is absent,
Unforgettable, unforgotten, present
Behind their eyelids though always away, a thought
Impossible to conjure, a shadow that lurks
Within their conscience : they need not wonder why.
Nothing that anyone can do or say
Now can change anything or make
Any difference. We shall grow old :
You a closed acre in my mind,
Shut and walled up, while I shall haunt yours
Until the years have an end, the heart break.

A. L. ROWSE.

Charlestown Harbour by Moonlight

DEAR Hardy, dear spirit, dear ghost,
Here I come, worn out with moil and toil
With cark and care you knew so well,
Down by the water's edge to the little port
Lit by the light of the moon in late September,
To refresh the spirit. Giving myself up to watch
The cruel crawling sea that creeps towards me,
The moonbeam, the moontrack pointing where I stand—
Where the quay's neck joins on to the land—
Absorbed by the spectacle of moon and sea.
The blunt dark nose of Napoleonic fort,
Gull Rock, Trenarren and Black Head in échelon ;
The lights of Polkerris answer the lights of Trenarren,
The dear delicious days of the war over at last,
Though the beat of returning bombers at sea
Awakens nostalgia, the rumour of apprehension.
Far out, the Eddystone and the horizon
That beckons ever on and outward
To illimitable seas of boyish adventure.
Turning round, I confront the harbour,
The little boats dipping and plunging,
Jibbing and slacking, bobbing and bowing,
That keep perpetual dance
With the pull and motion of the tide ;
Coastguard Terrace and the old cottages
Moonwhite moonblue in the ebb light.
Beyond, the hills of home, with that
Inextinguishable reference to the heart
That speaks of innocence, purity and hope,
Lost innocence, lost purity and hope
That yet means happiness now :
And over all, the inscrutable comment of the Plough.

A. L. ROWSE.

Intimate Landscape

I HAVE browsed sunward up your fields
 And reached the clay-verge—land which yields
 In perilous likeness all
 The varied moods that call
 Spirit and sense from pastures mild
 Into maturity steep and wild.

Here is the holy ground,
 Earth-womb where springs abound,
 Some frank for my refreshment, laughing still
 If clumsy hand disturb them, others numbed
 To poison at an uncouth touch. I thrill,
 Sensing these waters yet unplumbed,
 Fearful that when I stoop to slake
 My thirst I may mistake
 Unless you guide and show
 Which waters at which hours are mine to know.
 Under a smoky sky I view white cones,
 Some sharp with ice where fanged revulsions scar
 Their bowels, while others mask the tones
 Of smouldering volcanic heat ;
 Yet all bewilderingly similar
 To casual lover's glance,
 And paths along their slopes alike to lover's feet
 Unlearned in features' subtly-hid significance.

Oh darling, lead me safely through your world :
 Make clear each sign lest my male clay be hurled
 To flame when it seeks cooling, or to ice
 When lava leaps in you, hot veins entice
 Beneath a white breast I misread,
 Thinking it cold, and pass unconscious of our need.
 Instruct my nerves in nuance of your smile
 Lest clay-springs of your body deep and pure
 Pulse out to consummating ardours while
 I track dry kiln-beds, miss the lure,
 And slink unpurged through stale dust-laden air,
 Kiln-rafters darkening on my nuptial night's despair.

JACK R. CLEMO.

The Old Quarry in a fine October

Can any journey be vain
Which brings the traveller so far?
Is it vain that the sword-bright day
Twists a bright sword in the heart,
And, whilst the tinsel-white sun down the curve of the wood
Glittering glides,
The fabulous beauty of the dead
Tortures the memoried eyes?

Can any journey be vain
Come to so curious a place?
Flakes of the yellow-cloud day,
Clouded-yellow butterflies dance
Into the violet quarry-shadow now holding
Too dreamlike a peace,
Too hollow a dream, yet enfolded
By light. And oh, light's distance

Near as the next meadow
Grows to the traveller's vision,
But the peace of the violet shadow
Far as the soul's horizon! . . .

What can be said of a journey which finds no death
That is dead; no end
That is not a beginning; no peace
Less hollow than a dream?

FRANCES BELLERBY.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CORNISH

R. GLYNN GRYLLS

THE thing about the Cornish is that they are not nice : exciting and attractive, but not nice. They have colour enough to turn the spectacles of most onlookers pink, but it is not fast to light. The impulsiveness that goes as far as magnanimity does not sustain generosity ; the devotion, loyal to fanaticism, has no fidelity ; the forthcomingness keeps much more back than reticence—like an iceberg two-thirds under the water, if there were not anything less like an iceberg than any Celt.

There are exceptions, of course : non-Cornishmen who behave celtically. Walter Savage Landor, a complete Midlander, was one. He and E. J. Trelawny were friends in Florence for as long as there was the cockney Charles Armitage Brown to keep them apart and together. For it was the same window out of which Trelawny hung his wife by the hair that Landor threw his dinner at Mrs. Browning. A fact perfectly celtically true. It never happened but it might have done, like the adventures Trelawny made up which are no more out of the way than those he really had—and it is a criticism not of his veracity but of the limitations of Celtic imagination that it should be so.

The essence of Celtic truth is that it is faithful to mood, fickle to fact. It does not lie ; not to gain anything nor to save the skin. On the contrary, Cornishmen go out of their way to tell the truth when it will bring trouble upon themselves, like Bishop Colenso exposing the errors of Mosaic arithmetic, or at a deeper level—deeper by contemporary measurement—showing up the White government's behaviour to the Zulus : or like another Trelawny, the Bishop, defying James II on a matter of principle when there was no one less of a rebel or doctrinaire.

Truth and falsehood is not involved in giving the stranger the answer he wants. That is a matter of convention, a behaviour pattern that has proved itself the best to save time or keep counsel. If you are going to murder the stranger in his bed to get his bundle, you may as well meet him with politeness at the door. An Oriental trait, or the mark of a subject race?

Lawrence thought us hard-backed with squashy souls
That stepped on oozed white guts. He should have known
That subject races have watery bowels
From ceaseless trivial pressure on the bone,
And that disgust
Is often measured by similitude of dust.¹

Why a defeated people? That is a question one farther back, and here we are dealing not with Why but with What.

In the house of truth are many mansions: and they are going up quickly. There are statistics and there is archaeological reconstruction. The Cornishman should come into his own here, with his particular reaction to fact and with that power of seeing things to-day as fresh as they happened yesterday—the memory of which Meredith wrote:

"To the Cymry and the pure Kelt the past is at their elbows continuously. The past of their lives has lost neither face nor voice behind the shroud, nor are the passions of the flesh, nor is the animate soul, wanting to it. Other races forfeit infancy, forfeit youth and manhood, with their progression to the wisdom age may bestow. These have each stage always alive, quick at a word, a scent, a sound, to conjure up scenes, in spirit and in flame."

What is more remarkable than Celtic truth is Celtic imagination; its paucity and impotence. Where are the poets and artists and composers of the first rank? Where, even, the interpreters of the Arts or the connoisseurs? The Cornish are not artistic—nor are good artists—but they are not artists either. Their quick response to stimulus is not imagination, not the "creative spirit" in action. Seeing piskies on the downs or knockers in the mines is nothing to do with imagination: with the Cornish it isn't even imaginativeness, but simply reaction to a sensitized soil. There lacks the capacity to make that final effort for delivery which clothes the word with flesh. The men of science have come nearest to having it: Humphry Davy, John Couch Adams, Jonathan Couch, and inventors like Trevithick or Trengrouse. They have been able to take the leap that

¹ From "Peace Alfred Wallis!", by Ronald Bottrall.

brings light across the gulf. It is part of the Celtic paradox that it should be so.

No people gambols less in a Celtic twilight. In the Celtic heyday twilight was an awful hour that presaged the darkness. It only became picturesque to a gas-lit generation when Pan petered out in Kensington Gardens.

Where does it go, then, all the colour? The warm tones of manner, the light and shade of speech?

The colour goes into the personality. Almost one might say it is enough for the Cornish to be Cornish; but not quite, for they have a full measure of Celtic discontent. The energy that makes for colourfulness goes into the business of living—always a hard one in Cornwall: the fervour into congregational worship—into a personal relationship with omnipotence, not into embellishing its dwelling-place; the enterprise into seeking fortunes afield.

A forgotten larger part of the population of Cornwall is overseas—pioneers in a great trek to minefields and ranches that has, characteristically, not been recorded, for with all their ability at dressing the window the Cornish are not good at selling their wares. They come home when they can (and always send back gifts generously), and to die when they can, but it is a small proportion over which to erect perpetual angels of nostalgia. The granite in those that go away is more typical of the backbone of the country than the lichen that remains.

Cultural emigration in our own generation looks like having it both ways. There is something new in the craftsmen coming in to work because they are attracted to the country and the people for the right reasons: they bring self-respect, not flattery. And in the Cornish who go out there is the old tradition.

The elements of Celtic imagination come to something when grafted on to foreign stock or transplanted to foreign soil; ideas cease to inbreed and more are brought to live birth. So that to-day Cornish writing and art, to name no names, are virile and thrusting: ascendant, when next door there is every sign of decadence.

The Cornishman is at his best outside Cornwall, even if he has to go back to replenish the fires of his spirit:

And I have come
 Out of Cornwall, out of the kingdom of *cliché*,
 Out of the region of misunderstanding, out
 Of the dark realm of suspicion and misapprehension. . . .

And I am free. Yet each step that takes me away
 I see these evidences that I am bound,
 Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, eye
 Of my eye, one with the land that has denied me :¹

The Cornishman is at his worst at home ; not in his unpleasantness to his own people, which is something neither to be liked nor disliked but accepted (wit must be kept in circulation, emotions exercised), but in his pleasantness to the stranger.

The sins of the miners and fishermen that Wesley came to save are wholesome beside the charm-mongering to which the traffic in tourists presents temptation. It is ("Good Lord, deliver us") a passing thing. Sooner or later the foreigner will be frightened away, either by some sudden turning upon him with that Celtic unaccountability that runs from a sudden storm off the Lizard to the prickling of the porcupine, or by withdrawal. Deeper and deeper will the treasure be hidden until the Cornish disappear after it themselves and the foreigner is left encompassed by a silence from which his own emptiness can strike no echo. And in the moment when he shivers, the Little People walking over his grave will be avenged for piskiedom.

This is a hideous and wicked country,
 Sloping to hateful sunsets and the end of time,
 Hollow with mine-shafts, naked with granite, fanatic
 With sorrow. Abortions of the past
 Hop through these bogs ; black-faced, the villagers
 Remember burnings by the hewn stones.²

That is from a perceptive stranger, and has the beginning of wisdom—and of love. Things, like the Cornish, best left alone if you don't want to get hurt.

¹ From *Leaving Cornwall : Autumn 1944*, by A. L. Rowse.

² From *The Mermaid at Zennor*, by John Heath-Stubbs (*Time and Tide*, December 4th, 1948).

“Q”

E. W. MARTIN

IN the course of his life Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch exhibited an energy and an enthusiasm for literature not surpassed by that of Saintsbury himself. But whereas Saintsbury was invariably true to type, always the scholar and researcher, Sir Arthur's impact upon his generation suffered by the very variety and abundance of this novelist, short-story writer, poet, critic, anthologist, and journalist.

It is too early yet to make up one's mind about “Q's” position in literature, to winnow the more permanent of his works from those which were mere preparations or promises. In his excellent biography Dr. Brittain is only incidentally occupied with literary criticism; he has salvaged from a wealth of personal memories and by industrious research a whole portrait of this stoical and captivating man of West-country stock who was born at Bodmin in 1863, and whose life thereafter was bound up indissolubly with Cornwall.

The brevity of an article, however, does provide an opportunity for tentative enquiry into some of the reasons for supposing that this life so full of causes and purposes, had two dominant ones; and for the belief that the critic and lecturer, the poet-citizen of Arnoldian stature who did so much to mould the taste of his juniors, spreading culture lavishly as the daily adornment of full living, will outlast the writer of fiction.

The first of “Q's” purposes is to be seen in his fiction-writing phase, which began in 1887 with the Stevensonian romance *Deadman's Rock*, and ended with *Foe-Farrell* in 1918. His first novel, therefore, was written in imitation of *Treasure Island*, and his last bears some resemblance to Stevenson's bizarre schizophrenic study, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. On the basis

of such facts the reader might bracket "Q" with such romancers as the irresponsible Rider Haggard and with John Buchan, though he is as much their superior stylistically as he is Stevenson's superior in intellectual toughness.

Quiller-Couch was never merely an æsthete. He constantly kept in mind the social function of literature, but one cannot escape the conviction that he chose novel-writing not because inherently adapted to the form, but in order to acquire an audience, to get a platform from which to speak with Attic grace on a variety of themes. In his development "Q" can be compared to Thomas Hardy. Hardy gave up writing novels because of hostile criticism and because his approach to literature had always been poetic. He was at that time fifty-seven years of age; "Q" was fifty-five when he ceased to write imaginatively. Change in the nature of his responsibilities, due to a university appointment, no doubt influenced him considerably, but an examination of his novels does not suggest that he ever gave himself fully to fiction. In some of his short stories, like "The Paupers" from *The Delectable Duchy*, the quality of the man is movingly felt; and in his novels there is style, dignity, humour, and yet the narrative is not always moulded to the theme, the tales do not seem like unities and are saved from mediocrity by their style and eccentricities.

"Q" disliked and distrusted all indiscriminate usage of such terms as 'classical' and 'romantic', but he defined them, when forced to do so, as follows: "It amounts to this: some men have a sense of form stronger than their sense of colour: some men have a sense of colour stronger than their sense of form." "Q's" sense of form was never highly developed; he was not the supreme technician as Stevenson was; but his sense of colour was notable. He was a romantic; his world was a supremely human world; he never forgot that it was life he was writing of as a novelist, that reality which, if mirrored artistically, produced Literature.

When all is said, "Q" is much too large a figure easily to occupy the particular corner in imaginative literature which somehow has become his own. In the course of his thirty years as a novelist "Q" created literature. He was the greatest of the Cornish novelists; his second novel, *The Astonishing History of Troy Town*, with its comic characters and gentle irony, deserved to be what it has since become—a Cornish classic. Even this book and the historical romances do not rise to greatness; they cannot be compared with Hardy's Wessex chronicles.

If we read now *The Splendid Spur*, *The Westcotes*, *Hetty Wesley*, or any of the novels dealing with particular periods of history there is a recognition that here was one who could tread "Alp-high among the whispering dead"; a historical novelist as colourful as Hewlett, with as broad a sympathy, a greater scholarship and an equal love for old manners and customs. It would be an error to say that "Q" failed in *The Splendid Spur* or *Hetty Wesley*; more correct to observe that he never attempted a full-scale historical novel, remaining content with a narrow canvas compared with the vast backgrounds of historical novels like *The Cloister and The Hearth* or Scott's romances.

Two novels for which "Q" himself had an affection are *Sir John Constantine* and *Foe-Farrell*. In the preface to the first-named, "Q" writes: "If you would know anything of a friend who has addressed you so often under an initial, you may find as much of him here as in any of his books." And what we find is a youth in love with adventure, easily moved to kindness, fearless and full of an insatiable curiosity about life. The narrative is slow-moving, but the book is full of facts about Cornwall, and "Q" is as prodigal with tit-bits about his beloved Duchy as Phillpotts is with his descriptions of Dartmoor antiquities.

Foe-Farrell is a more complex work of art, the mode of its telling not such as to make for easy reading. The novel has real power, however, something of "Q's" sense of the evil of war and the futility of hatred; the theme indeed might well be not the futility but the danger of hatred, which binds one as close as love to the object of the emotion until, like Foe, we become what we hate. The first world war brought grief to "Q" in the loss of his son, and this loss of buoyancy may have caused him to turn in his maturity to other things than the writing of novels.

II

Never given to over-confidence, "Q" took up his work as a Professor of English Literature at Cambridge warily. This Oxonian had a fortress to scale when he delivered his inaugural lecture. He brought the trained and practical literary sense of a professional writer into the halls of Cambridge, confounding with his eloquence and erudition those who supposed that a popular novelist would be deficient in classical knowledge. Ever a fighter in the cause of learning, "Q" soon earned respect in Cambridge as he had earned it in Cornwall. At this stage began what appear to be his most natural and fruitful tasks: the education not only of students at the University, but of that wider audience he had gathered round him as a novelist.

Perhaps the best known of his critical writings is the volume of reprinted lectures *On the Art of Writing*. In this book "Q" speaks with undisputed authority. His style is ideally suited to his subject ; and he brings to that subject a great wealth of knowledge, a contempt for pedantry, and a gentle humanity ever full of wonderment for the riches of the past. Here is a mind enriched with the heritage of a universal culture, capable of carrying forward the work that other scholars had begun.

In the companion volume, *On the Art of Reading*, "Q" is perhaps even more personal in his approach. He speaks of the work of Furnivall, Skeat, and Aldis Wright, men who were pioneers in the teaching of English, provincially-minded men who had to extol Anglo-Saxon culture because Europe had ignored it. Although he knew their weaknesses, "Q" did not share them, he saw culture as something above nationality, and he could say with pride and humility : "If I presume to speak of foibles to-day, you will understand that I do so because, lightly though I may talk to you at times, I have a real sense of the responsibilities of this Chair. I worship great learning, which they had ; I loathe flippant detraction of what is great ; I have usually a heart for men-against-odds and the unpopular cause."

The proper teaching of English was for long such an unpopular cause, and throughout his career as a writer and lecturer "Q" was the enemy of all pedants and unintelligent schoolmasters, never accepting the notion that learning was for the few : "I say to you that Literature is not, and should not be, the preserve of any priesthood. To write English so as to make Literature, may be *hard*. But English is *not* a mystery, *not* a Professor's Kitchen."

"Q" never tired of reiterating that literature is a personal thing that cannot be divorced from life. He wanted it to illumine and to stimulate all life : "I believe that while it may grow—and grow infinitely—with increase of learning, the grace of a liberal education, like the grace of Christianity, is so catholic a thing—so absolutely above being trafficked, retailed, apportioned, among 'stations of life'—that the humblest child may claim it by indefeasible right, having a soul." So, when he addressed students in the University, "Q's" mind's eye would picture a group of little children in cold Cornish schools, monotonously droning out meaningless passages to a weary teacher ; or he would see a poor scholar, lonely as Jude, striving to overcome insurmountable obstacles.

"Q" takes his place naturally among the great critics—Sainte-Beuve, Coleridge, Matthew Arnold, Hazlitt, and even Saintsbury—who brought to their criticism something new and memorable. "Q's" contribution was his thoroughness and his range, his attention to background and detail. As Sainte-Beuve was a natural historian of minds, "Q" was an explorer and a collector. He could write on the poems of Hardy, the novels of Henry Kingsley, the poetry of humble William Browne, and always he left his subject larger than he found it.

"Q" will be remembered as a great critic and as the Editor of *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. His anthologies of prose, ballads, and sonnets are still read with pleasure by those who have come to rely on his judgment. "I like to think", he says in his preface to *The Oxford Book of English Prose*, writing of his predecessors Cannan and Waller, "that, when my time comes in turn, I shall survive in the Oxford Books of English Verse and English Prose along with these two good men."

The career of this scholar is a remarkable testimony to versatility and integrity. He loved Cornwall much, and was Editor of *The Cornish Magazine*, which ran for four numbers and set a standard difficult to maintain. During his lifetime it is not too much to say that "Q", populariser-in-chief among the Duchy's worthies, was its major novelist and critic, its chief educational adviser, a vigorous political figure, a yachtsman and a lover of the sea who was, in the words of Maarten Maartens, King of Fowey. In fact, for those who wanted a general view of the county, to become familiar with its alien atmosphere, "Q" was Cornwall. When he died the pilgrims still came to look at his house by the harbour, where he had spent so many useful years. It is a safe bet that the generation "Q" helped to educate will carry his ideals with them in their work and, remembering his teaching, will honour his memory and return at times to renew their faith in one who threw so much light on their age from the torch he carried.

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THE CORNISH DRAMA

P. A. LANYON-ORGILL

ANY Cornishman, or indeed anyone who loves Cornwall, who sets about the study of the old Keltic language spoken in the Duchy until the seventeenth century—the lingering remains until our own day have been but fragments of antiquarian knowledge rather than examples of a spoken tongue—is faced with a number of acute problems. The learning of the language itself presents few difficulties, for Cornish is easier than either Welsh or Breton, its closest relatives, but having mastered the grammar and some vocabulary, the student then finds that the only available literature for reading is of little interest, unless he confines his attention to the productions of modern authors, of whom especial mention should be made of R. Morton Nance.

However, Cornish is essentially a language of the past with a number of literary monuments to be read as they were intended by their authors, and not simply to be regarded as linguistical specimens to be dissected and analysed by professional scholars alone. Of these literary monuments, the only ones which have been made accessible in recent years have been the later fragments written by John Boson, William Gwavas, John Keigwin, and the other members of that celebrated fraternity who did so much to help to preserve at least a few remains of this grand old tongue in its last days of decline and subsequent disappearance.

The literature of the Cornish language written at a time when Cornish was the main language of the whole peninsula, and when very little borrowing from English sources had taken place, consisted almost entirely of works with a religious background. In this respect Cornish followed the same literary tradition as English and French, and not that of the other

Keltic languages, which concerned themselves rather with the heroic and romantic elements, than those from biblical sources.

The need to explain the stories of the Bible in simple language was the over-riding problem which confronted many of the early writers in the Germanic and Romance languages, and therefore it is not surprising that some of the first works which we find in these languages are little more than paraphrases of the accounts of the Creation, of the Exodus, and also of the Life of Christ. Closely allied with these paraphrases we find the Gospel-harmonies—attempts to combine the texts of the four gospels into a single, continuous work—and also long commentaries, in prose, explaining and expanding the original text. Subsequently, we find the two elements, the paraphrases and the commentaries, being combined into a single work, of which, by far and away, the best and most perfect example is a magnificent poem in Old Saxon called the *Heliand*, or “The Saviour”, a work to be included among the great masterpieces of literature.

This simple poetical version of a scriptural story is only found once in Cornish in the shape of the *Poem of Mount Calvary*, or *The Passion*, and it must be admitted, by even the most patriotic Cornishman, that it is a work of little interest and virtually no merit from the literary point of view.

The other medieval Cornish works are of a different type, however, and represent this religious tradition at a later stage in its development. The recitation of a simple rhymed version of the Gospel story does not seem to have appealed very strongly to the common people, and at an early date—possibly even before the Norman Conquest—plays were performed in the churches at Christmas, Easter, and other festivals, to illustrate the birth, life, death, and passion of Christ. About the close of the thirteenth century these plays were performed in the church yard instead of the church itself, and in England, at any rate, they tended to come under the influence of the town guilds rather than that of the Church, as had previously been the case. As the late Ernest Rhys remarked, “The friendly rivalry between the guilds, and the craftsmen’s pride in not being outdone by other crafts, helped to stimulate the town play, till at length the elaborate cycle was formed that began with sunrise on a June morning and lasted until the torch-bearers were called out at dusk to stand at the foot of the pageant.”

These cycles of plays, known as “miracles” or “mysteries”, were of a disjointed nature, chiefly due to their being the work of several separate authors, and also to the mode of presentation. Each town guild was

concerned with some particular aspect of the story, which covered the events from the Creation to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, and each scene was performed by a number of actors who used the top of a cart or waggon as a stage, and were drawn around the town from place to place, according to plan, and in a set order.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the English miracle plays are of a very poor literary standard, for the number of separate scenes was obviously excessive—the pageant given at York had no less than fifty-four scenes, while the Wakefield (Towneley) series had thirty-two, the Chester series twenty-four, and the so-called “*Ludus Coventriae*” forty-two scenes.

The Cornish religious plays, which constitute virtually the whole of the literary remains from the Middle Ages, on the other hand, are of a different type from the English, and it is not patriotic pride alone which leads us to suggest that they are better ; at least, they are much more readable for us to-day.

Basically, the most important of these Cornish plays are the three forming the great trilogy of *The Ordinalia*, for these, like their English counterparts, recount the whole scriptural story, with little originality of thought and an outward deep respect for the text of the Bible, but with a large proportion of lines which are ribald and profane, presumably inserted to appeal to the lower instincts of their audience. Apart from the Gospels themselves, some materials were drawn from other sources, of which we may mention the pseudo-Gospel of Nicodemus which seems to have been a favourite piece of light reading matter throughout the Middle Ages.

The *Ordinalia* consists of three plays which were performed on subsequent days, linked together by the celebrated Legend of the Cross. This legend told of how Seth received three seeds from the Tree of Life, which he placed in the mouth of Adam, his father, when he buried him on Mount Moriah. These three seeds grew into trees, two of which provided the wood for the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham and for Moses' rod with which he smote the rock respectively. After this the three trees became one, symbolising the Holy Trinity, and under this tree sat David. Solomon tried to use the wood of the tree when he was building the Temple on Mount Sion, but found that it would not fit in any position, so he cast it away and later buried it. Over it there formed the healing pool of Bethesda, and when Christ came on earth the beam floated to the surface

of the waters. It was taken by the Jews and provided the wood for the Cross on Mount Calvary.

The employment of this beautiful legend as a theme running through three otherwise disjointed dramas is to be regarded as a stroke of sheer genius on the part of the author of these three plays, which are known as the *Origo Mundi* (the Creation), *Passio Domini Nostri* (the Passion), and *Resurrexio Domini Nostri* (the Resurrection) respectively, and which contain a total of nearly nine thousand lines.

Apart from the literary inclination of the author, another reason for the compact and regular construction of this Cornish trilogy is to be found in the mode of presentation. Whereas, as has been stated, the English works were performed in a confined space, the Cornish ones took place in vast open-air amphitheatres especially constructed for the purpose, to which the people came from miles around and pitched their tents in the neighbourhood for the festival period. The great Cornish antiquary of the eighteenth century, Dr. Borlase, described two of these amphitheatres—one at St. Just-in-Penwith and the other at Perranzabuloe—in detail, noting that the one at St. Just was no less than 126 feet in diameter, with a mound around it in which benches were cut out, while the other was slightly larger.

It is interesting to reconstruct, in our minds alone, alas !, the sort of scene that would have met the eye of the beholder there by the church of St. Just four centuries ago. With the mighty Atlantic in the distance, Cape Cornwall but a stone's throw away, and all around those great open moors, there would be gathered a crowd of many hundreds, possibly even thousands during the performances themselves, with all the necessary conveniences to meet the requirements of the people—stalls with fruit and food, as well as amusement booths—bear-baiting, and cock-fighting in the earlier days, and so forth. And, over all, the performance of the greatest of all stories, with a deep religious significance, which would tend to keep order and preserve peace among people who might be inclined to act more freely than usual if they regarded the event as a public holiday rather than as also a serious occasion.

That order was not always maintained is apparent from the account given by Richard Carew in his *Survey of Cornwall*, published in 1602, who tells of the performance which he witnessed being broken off due to a disturbance, not among the audience, but between the "Ordinary" (or stage manager) and one of the actors.

As with most literary productions of the Middle Ages, it is not possible to be certain of either the author's identity or the date of composition of the *Ordinalia*. From the many references to places in the neighbourhood of Penryn, however, and also remembering that Glasney College—the greatest foundation of its kind at that time in Cornwall—was founded in 1265 in the same area, it is reasonable to suppose that Pedler's view is correct and that the dramas were written by a member of that house, probably at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Some time after the *Ordinalia* a play on the life of Saint Meriasek, patron saint of Camborne, was written, probably in East Cornwall. It follows the general line of similar medieval works, having a small nucleus of history but also including a mass of material of the author's own invention. It is of little interest to the student of Cornish, for the vocabulary contains many English words and phrases.

Three centuries after the *Ordinalia* William Jordan of Helston wrote *The Creation of the World, with Noah's Flood* (1611). This work is in effect a later version of the *Origo Mundi*, whole passages being borrowed piecemeal from the earlier work, and includes quite a number of English lines interspersed in the Cornish—the speeches of the devils being often in English, while those of the better persons are in Cornish!

Jordan's *Creation* shows the Cornish drama in decline. All the great virtues displayed by the *Ordinalia* are not to be found—even the verse itself is not so regular and readable as before, as in those passages which he has borrowed almost word for word. With the virtual death of Cornish as a spoken language, literary composition ceased, but it is pleasing to note that the writing of dramas has been one of the aspects of the recent revival. No more hopeful sign for the future for the rebirth of Cornish could be found than R. Morton Nance's allegorical play in the form of an enquiry into the death of the Chough, the Spirit of Cornwall, called *An Balores*, and also the charming miracle-play *Bewnans Alysaryn* by Peggy Pollard, which both carry on the tradition of the best work in the old Cornish tongue—the great drama-trilogy from the Middle Ages.



GURNARD'S HEAD FROM ZENNOR COVE

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FISHING BOATS MOORED AT THE QUAY, LOOE

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LAND'S END AND LONGSHIPS LIGHTHOUSE

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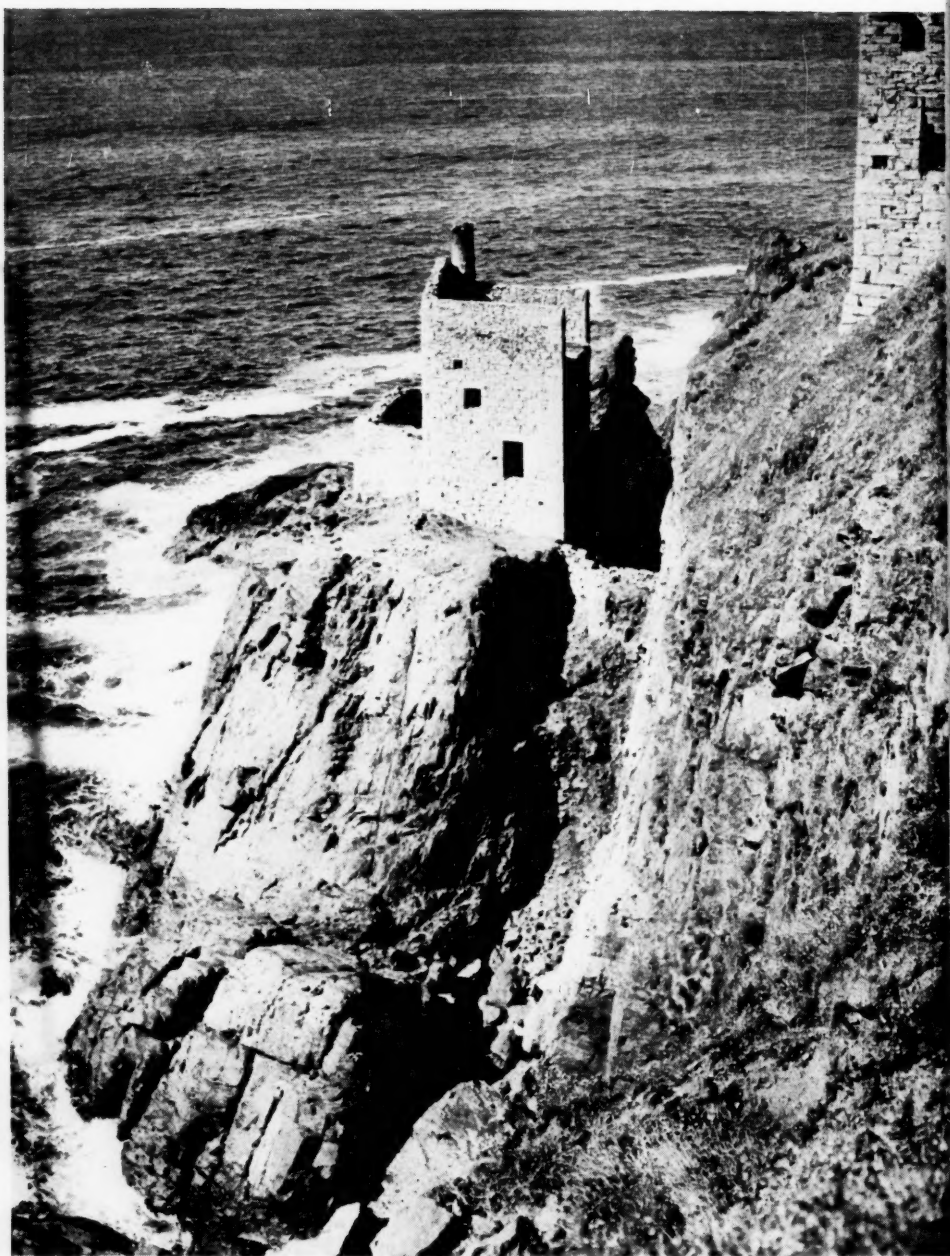
FRENCH CRABBERS IN ST. IVES BAY

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STILL LIFE AND CORNISH LANDSCAPE

Bea Nicholson



THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

John Armstrong



CORNISH LANDSCAPE, 1948

W. Barns-Graham



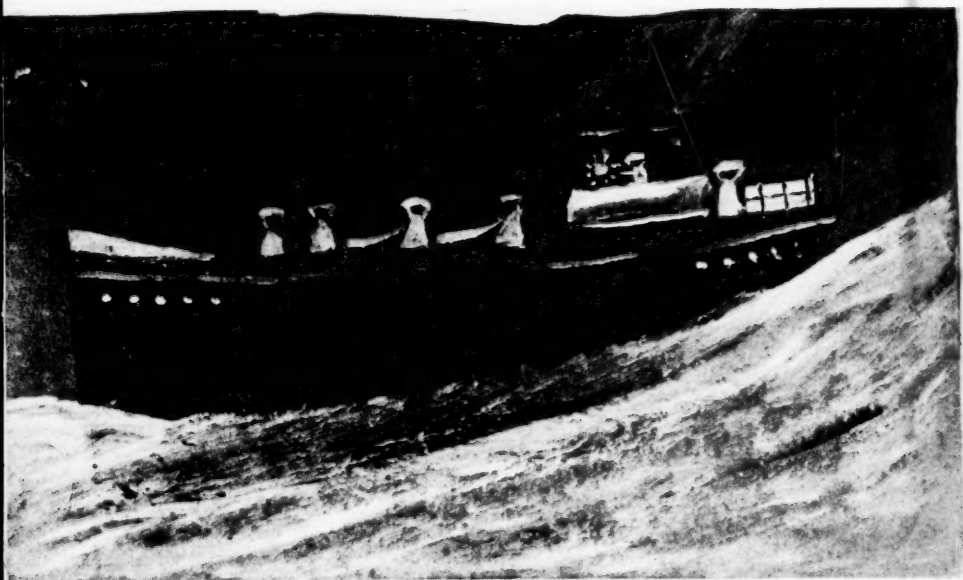
ST. IVES HARBOUR UNDER SNOW

John A. Park

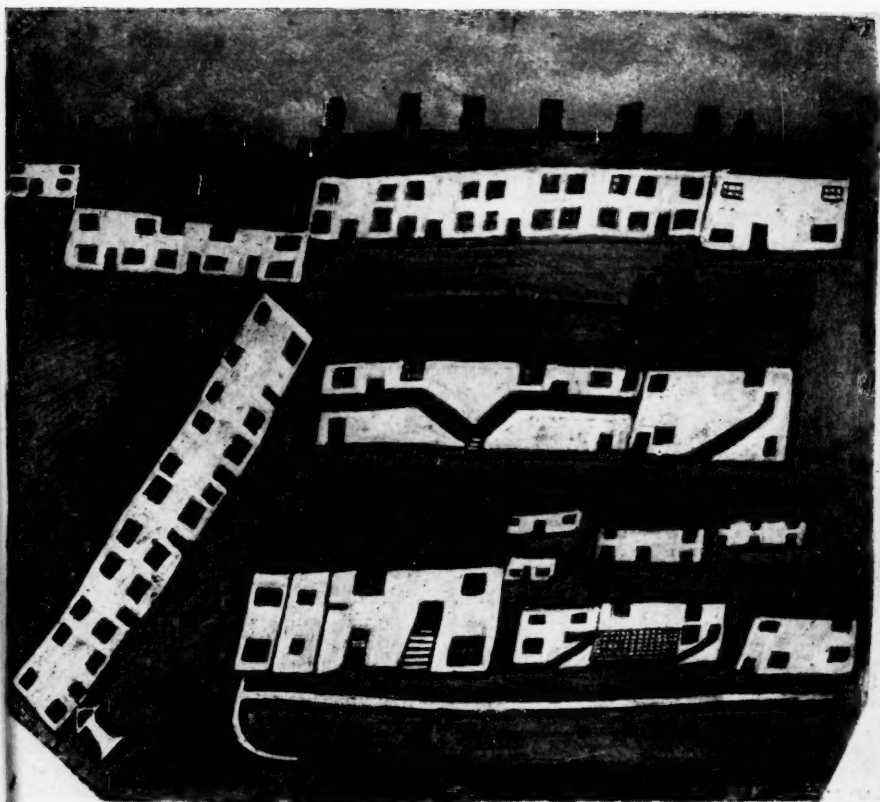


RADIAL

Barbara Hepworth



Alfred Wallis



HOUSES

Alfred Wallis



TUCKINGMILL CHAPEL

Tom Early



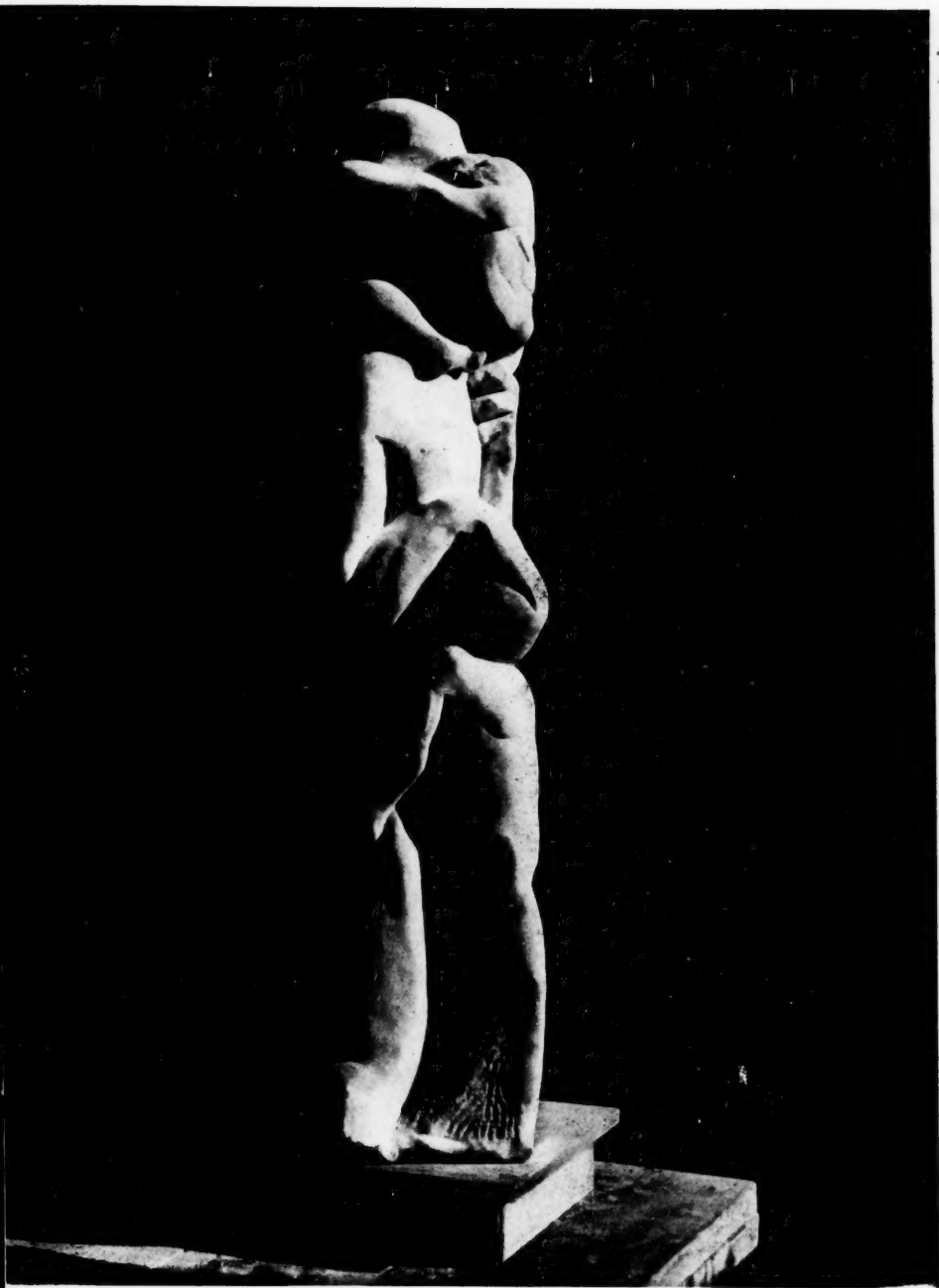
SVEN BERLIN AT WORK

Photographs by Stuart Black, Torquay



MAN WITH CHILDREN, SICILIAN MARBLE (*Front view*)

Sven Berli



MAN WITH CHILDREN, SICILIAN MARBLE (*Side view*)

Sven Berlin



MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD. POLYPHANT STONE

Søren Bertram

MY WORLD AS A SCULPTOR¹

SVEN BERLIN

IN the library at home when I was a boy there were two thick, red volumes called *Trans-Himalayas*: these were an account by a Swedish uncle of mine of his adventures and discoveries in Tibet. I remember pictures of him being charged by a wounded yak, of him fighting his way through a blizzard and crossing an unknown mountain pass. He was an explorer, emblematical of the spirit in mankind that has led us down the centuries, finding new continents, entering forbidden cities, unearthing forgotten temples, discovering images—to this tribe also belonged Lancelot, Colombus, and the Medieval Alchemists.

I wanted to be an explorer.

Once this feeling had awakened it never died. I grew to love the beautiful and strange things made by men of past civilizations all over the world.

It is evident now that images are buried everywhere, not only in the earth, the rock, the forest, but also deep in the mind: images that have been made already and those not yet created. A sculptor explores the heart of his stone to discover the image there buried—buried also within himself. An image that is there but not yet created always lives within the potentiality of the stone or wood in the same way as thunder dreams in the heart of each drop of dew.

My father showed me the solar systems on a frosty winter's night. His head was filled with stars as he stood there on the hill telling how many light-years was Venus away, how a star may still shine upon the earth for centuries after it has been extinguished, like the soul going on its

¹ Notes for *Disturbance in the West*.

journey after death. I was filled with the wonder and awe which the contemplation of infinite space will inspire in the least of mortals, and of the heavenly bodies moving in space, dying, being born, whirling on beyond the limits of time. This, too, was a discovery. One day men would be fired in rockets to find the hidden things of other worlds. . . .

But it was still a long step to realizing I could carve a new world out of my dreams.

There would seem to be little congruity between these experiences and the fact that I was trained as an engineer. That this happened was no doubt lack of insight on my father's part and lack of foresight on my own. It made me restive and unhappy. I was trying to paint with a persistence that amounted to obsession. Horrified by the sudden realization that I was trapped in the cities, working in factories and offices, I broke away and became an *adagio* dancer on the music halls.

This I took very seriously and greatly enjoyed. From the stage came a renewed sense of life, comedy, adventure, above all I had discovered a way of expression. The work was hard and dangerous, needing considerable concentration and skill. To be burlesqued by comedians like Nervo and Knox did much to help one laugh at oneself and the best one could create.

But as yet there seemed no connection between these things that were happening.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer.

At least I had come to realize that all experience is valuable to an artist, particularly so when it stirs the inner places of the mind. And my dancing, in spite of its nature and environment, became a genuine art-form through which I was trying to speak.

Engineering had developed my sense of structure and form, order and space, just as had my father's revelations about the universe ; moreover, it gave me a love and care in the use of tools and in the building of a workshop. This was good, for sculptors are not prophets, they are workmen ; it only so happens that what they make, if it is worth while, becomes permeated with the hidden forces of life. There is a peculiar delight in doing work for its own sake, if that work is creative. It was for such things that I cared, and I was determined to do them.

Sculptors are carvers of stone and wood, or any other material from tallow to perspex—but carvers. *Sculptura*, from the Latin word "to carve" : that is a precise meaning.

It has always seemed to me a mistaken idea that modelling for bronze is a department of the art of sculpture. It is not. It is something on its own, like pottery : much closer to pottery, in fact. Although it is a plastic and spatial art, and may be of use to the sculptor, its whole process is opposite to the process of carving : a building up from a centre instead of cutting into one. It is also concerned with the translation of the poetic idea through mediums foreign to one another, whereas, in carving, stone is your road, your guide and your journey's end. I am a carver in stone—a sculptor, therefore.

Now, a word more about dancing, and we will begin to see how all this fits together.

Adrian Stokes pointed out to me that dancing was the true link between the plastic arts and music. His own pictures, he said, were like the closing scene of a ballet : it is not strange, then, that I first understood them when listening to Mozart one summer afternoon in his sitting-room.

Dancing is also the human form and the poetic image in space seen and inwardly experienced from many viewpoints in time, developed on the laws of gravity, rhythm, colour, tension, the spiral, and the arabesque. It was a flash of real insight on the part of John Irwin when he thought of having Ram Gopal to dance before the images at the reopening of the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum after the most recent war. Much in this field—and the link with music—offers work of discovery to some questing mortal somewhere.

Carving is a dance over and under and round and through a piece of stone during the creation of a three-dimensional image in space, which is worked out in a series of kinetic relationships of form that force the observer to move. It is also a journey over an unknown landscape.

Although my work on the stage was a kind of bastard dance, I worked hard and with enough devotion over eight years to make me realize that to dance was to know the stress and strain of a steel-constructed bridge, the law of moving water and the behaviour of the heavenly bodies.

My early passion for discovery not only led to reading philosophy, poetry, and the religious writings of the world, to become also a student of human life, but it led me into the museums among the early Coptic, Assyrian, Egyptian, Spanish, and African carvings ; developed a love for the sculptures of ancient China and for the medieval English alabasters that look as though they are flattened against the space that surrounds them ; for the religious carvings of Châtres and of early India. My taste, in fact, was always for the primitive and early creations of any civilization.

It led to Cornwall, the most primitive of all places, where one can recapture the delight of playing with a crystal as a child, and watching the arms of the lighthouses divide out the nights when the sea is oily with moonlight and the angels and dragons are slumbering in the cliffs. This is truly a sculptor's country, itself made of granite, but few have realized it. The terraced landscape of the little fishing towns and the geological nature of the rock at once become operative, along with the submarine cargo of shells, skulls, fish, and plants, in orientating one's vision back to the fundamental shapes of nature as was the case with the sculptors of earlier civilizations. This, added to the peculiar influence Cornwall has upon the unconscious mind of man (of which I have spoken at greater length elsewhere), brings into line once more the ancient forces of creation which, it may be surmised, have a close affinity with the spirit of life. In such an environment it becomes possible for modern man to make a statement about humanity penetrating its mechanical armour and seeing it once again as a dynamic part of the universal order governed by the mystery of God.

From the beginning of my quest I had searched into the structure and form of things, finding, as a reward, that each image of nature was built on the same laws. I could draw everything : trees, women, hills, animals, birds, rocks, the sea. The wonder of the world opened up : the great storehouse was mine.

When the sea gets into a leg I am carving what excitement there is ! It goes charging through the whole of the stone, and a man, as if by magic, is transformed into an ocean with rocks and tides, shells and caves—a sea-dragon. The whole galaxy of one's experience pours in upon him : one works in a kind of dream as though someone else is making the image. Is it not true that the doors of life, when open, release shapes and forces hidden inside us for ages ? Be that as it may, there is no *reasonable* explanation of what happens.

The realization that I could carve in space came quite late. It began about ten years ago, when I found some blocks of sandstone green in a stream which ran through an old feudal estate near Camborne.

. . . worn out with dreams
A weather-worn marble Triton
Among the streams. . .

These I carried to my cottage on the North Cliffs and carved them into primordial heads. It was extremely difficult. I remember the enormous effort, unlike anything known before, of trying to realize the conception

of an image in the round. My first carvings were little more than drawings on the four sides of the stone. It took the next eight years to understand the meaning of spatial form with its volume, its infinite difference of direction : to create a living thing in stone, the stone an entirety in itself with a centre of vitality and tension that can be made to exist in space.

It was Cornwall that helped to release and develop this thing, which, I began to see, was an extension of my painting and drawing—even of my dancing. Now I am so deeply rooted in the Cornish landscape that to go and carve in a city, in a forest, or among mountains, would so alter my vision that it would probably be impossible to work for a considerable time. Painting, drawing, and sculpture is seen as a developing process of which each is a part—painting an extension of form into colour, carving an extension of form and colour into space, each having their origins in drawing. As one advances these methods become almost a ritual practised on a way in search of understanding, much in the same way as the experiments of the ancient alchemists were necessary in releasing the fantasy that would reveal to them the secret of life.

The war, perhaps, made me care even more for the things I had always loved ; it gave me a greater devotion for the growth and shape of a flower—taught me to be patient in battle.

I met Naum Gabo : from him I learned the meaning of space as an elemental fact.

But my forms, when I came to carve them, were spatial mainly in the sense of volume. There was no desire to construct a relationship of spaces with my Russian friend ; nor, with Henry Moore, a wish to scoop the space out from inside the form. The character and limitation of my vision, from the beginning, was one of forms folding round themselves and round each other : the spiral rather than the arabesque, the Spinning Dervish rather than the Dancing Siva. Flower-forms, seashell- and fetus-forms : not the womb, but the child in the womb. The grown man was a tree or a sleeping sea. From that point I worked.

That things happened in this way was good. Just as in drawing I had learned my laws without being moulded into a school caste, so I learned my carving naturally, from my own point of view, and was able to absorb the ancient and contemporary sculptures without aping them.

It seemed that suddenly I could carve, almost as if a miracle had happened. But the truth (apparent now) is that the first carvings in space were preceded by a long period of unconscious gestation. I had gone

through my influences to maturity as a painter. When it came to carving my vision was quite clear and personal. And it seemed that I had had long experience with the tools I was using.

Early days in engineers' workshops were not forgotten, nor the even earlier place I built as a boy to make a dolls' house for my sister : this love and understanding of tools is a private, almost primitive experience of delight which every craftsman knows—it seems to be ingrained in one from the beginning.

For an artist, the quality of his craftsmanship must be judged on the degree in which, through perfection and through imperfection, it enables him to express his vision. One may be charged with bad craftsmanship for leaving marks where the chisel has bitten into the side of a foot or a rasp grazed the bridge of a nose. But to me the fashion (almost a fetish, and nothing to do with craftsmanship) for a machine-like finish which destroys the tool-marks is a heresy peculiar to the remote cold-bloodedness of our times and against humanity. The unconscious gesture of the hand passed down the ages by some unknown sculptor is emblematical of the creative energy of man—a universal signature.

- My work is already ancient when it leaves my hands. I believe it has always been buried in me and in the stone. From having the potentiality of many different shapes it is revealed finally in a crystallization of these in the only way it could have been done.

I cannot say with Nietzsche "for me an image slumbers in the stone", partly true as this is. It appears to me that there are at least three worlds of fantasy which fuse together in the final work of art—they come from the objective world, the mind and the material being used.

Let us say there is a point of life when the inner world explodes into the normal waking life and integrates all the reaches of the mind in the vision of a single poetic image, projected into the stone (conversely from the stone into oneself). From then on one is imprisoned by the stone—there is no escape. Drawings are made—sometimes they are done weeks before—perhaps not at all : the drawing for sculpture is a notation of that moment of explosion. But the instant the chisel starts its work yet another adventure has begun ; moving into a third world of fantasy which grows from the material being used are the first two worlds which have already united, and this is the period which brings cohesion and life.

The artist submits entirely to the law and drive of his inner life and to the law of the stone, its grain, tension, gravity, and strength. He becomes an instrument through which these two sets of natural laws are co-operating, rather than conflicting, to find a union in the created image, potential in the moment between all these forces.

He is not, therefore, working in a state of conscious will, using his intellect alone, but with it he is using his physique, instinct, emotion, and unconscious mental force, from which emanates his experience of the whole drama of human life. It is precisely this union of the worlds through the material that explains the paradox of unreasonability and illuminates our understanding through more senses than one.

In this way he is enabled to be *in* the stone yet looking at the image—which is also within himself—from many points of view at one time. The stone becomes a valley, a mountain, a twisted road ; it is the curve of a falling wave, a dance, a journey to the stars. All these experiences are lived out in submission to a poetic idea, which, when it is made concrete, is something grown out of the fusion of objective, mental, and plastic fantasy, made to live in space by the mysterious force we call creative energy, the source of which we know nothing.

Perhaps that is one reason why, like the Tibetan mystical runners who fixed themselves on a star and could see it long after it had set, an artist will pursue his obsession to the end.

Each time a new idea thunders down, like a wounded yak, I tremble with fear and excitement—another adventure has begun.

PORTRAIT OF PENZANCE

J. H. MARTIN

I AM writing this in Penzance on a Saturday afternoon. The calendar announces January 29 but the warm, bright sunshine and the blue bay beyond the palm trees of the Morrab Gardens create the illusion of an ideal Easter, with primroses and new frocks and a holiday zest in the air. This is the Penzance which the guide-books have promised the winter visitor ever since Dr. Frank Nicholls, afterwards physician to George II, ordered a patient from the West Indies to go there—"a favourite resort of Hygeia", as someone wrote in 1823, "where the most delicate invalid may safely venture abroad. . . ."

The weather is not always so mild and dry as we find it to-day and the people in the streets, less innocent than the readers of guide-books, are prophesying that we shall have to suffer for this. They are probably right. Even the anonymous writer of 1823, more heavily burdened with conscience than some of his successors, admits that the inhabitants of this favoured spot seldom have reason to complain of drought ; adding, lest he be misunderstood, as honest writers so often are, that "a Cornishman never enjoys better health and spirits than in rainy weather".

Since then, alas, we have degenerated. A wet Saturday, we have to confess with a proper shame, would not have packed The Terrace as the April-like sunshine has packed it to-day.

Every few minutes more folk arrive. Buses empty their cargoes from St. Ives and St. Buryan, Nancledra and Nancherrow, the housewife looking for something off the ration, the farmer in his "bit of best suit", the farm boy going to the pictures, and with them people who do not belong to these large categories—the retired Civil Servant from Carbis

Bay, the E. M. Delafield Provincial Lady on her way to Boots for the new Margery Sharp ("such fun roughing it in a Cornish cottage"), the corduroyed artist thinking of Christopher Wood, the general intending to write his reminiscences, the couple from Leeds wondering if St. Michael's Mount is really as exciting as the Tower at Blackpool.

Perhaps no town of the same size in England could show such a mixture of personalities and, what is more, such an easy mixture. A little while ago I saw one of the five greatest mathematicians in the world eating at a restaurant table with a shopgirl and a red-faced countrywoman as Old Cornish as a cottage on Grumbla Downs. My mind passes to other pictures: the late Professor G. H. Hardy, of Cambridge, considered by some the finest intellect in this country, waiting for the *Tidings* to appear with the day's cricket news; Bertrand Russell coming in from Porthcurno and the Haldanes from Treen; John Buchan having his hair cut at a shop in Causewayhead; Bernard Shaw striding across the Promenade like an athlete; Augustus John appearing from the Savoy Cinema in a suit of wonderful yellow. It can all be summed up in one picture: the farmers at Lavin's Corner watching another farmer pass, a well-weathered old man in leggings, and trying in vain to "place" him: in vain, because he comes from Dorset and his name is Thomas Hardy. . . .

It will be said that most of these visitors did not stay at Penzance and that they may have entered the town for purely practical reasons. This may be true; but even if Penzance is "merely the centre" of an interesting area, it can hardly fail to have, on that account, an interesting character of its own. I submit, admittedly with some prejudice, that it has.

There are those who think little of the town, and others who actually dislike it—some of them, perhaps, because they think they should, much as certain people think they should dislike Mendelssohn. L. Russell Muirhead, author of the post-war Penguin guide to Cornwall, finds it uninspiring. "Not only", he writes, "has it few buildings worth even a glance but much of it is distinctly ugly."

Even W. H. Hudson, grateful though he was for the Morrab Library and "the great Bridger", merely tolerated the town as an alternative to worse places—"I didn't want to be shut up in holes like Fowey, so I came to Penzance, which is more level and open."

In fairness, let us say that Cornwall has few towns that are beautiful and England few that are inspiring in winter; and then let us look for the deeper realities, hidden from the casual visitor, which create the character of a town.

Some of these realities are not pleasing. Penzance has a small town's full quota of false respectability and petty-mindedness. One notes a tendency towards querulous criticism, a habit of arguing in narrow, personal terms, a searching for ulterior motives, a peevish desire to shoot the pianist, and a lack of appreciativeness where one would expect an eager gesture of pride.

If Penzance stood on Cape Cod it would have been renamed Davytown. As it is, the only local memorial to the greatest man Cornwall has ever produced is the statue, growing greener every month, at the top of Market Jew Street ; and no one, it seems, protested against the incongruity of erecting a public convenience at the great man's feet. There is no Davy Day and no Davy School ; the creator of the modern scientific spirit has been remembered more gratefully in Geneva, where he died, than in Penzance, where he was born. Similarly, Leonard Courtney has been half forgotten, and William Roberts is ignored so completely that it is necessary to explain who he was : an authority on art hardly less distinguished than the world-renowned Bernhard Berenson.

As with prophets, so with institutions. The Morrab Library, one of the glories of Penzance, is allowed to exist obscurely, and the Royal Geological Society, founded before geology was properly recognized, was threatened in 1947 with notice to quit. In public matters, and in small everyday issues, one is sometimes uncomfortably reminded that Penzance lies at "that extremity of Britain which is called Belerion".

Remoteness, indeed, provides the clue to Penzance—that, and the fact that it grew to maturity during the Victorian era and absorbed, in enhanced form, the virtues and vices of that time. Its great period was the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Suddenly and thrillingly this place far from anywhere, this village which had been granted a charter, caught the *Zeitgeist* and helped to shape it. In about one generation Penzance became the home town of a Fellow of the Royal Society and two of its Presidents. Davy, Davies Gilbert, and Dr. Borlase, who died seven years before Davy's birth, cannot be passed off in a few comments on the freakish incidence of genius ; they belonged to an astonishing society of intellectually eager folk which rose on the shores of Mount's Bay in the early 1800s. In 1802 Penzance had three thousand people, and in 1820 about five thousand ; and between those dates it instituted the second geological society in the whole world, a public library and dispensary, agricultural and humane societies, a school of industry,

various places of worship, and several book clubs. It produced within a lifetime Richard Couch, the naturalist ; Dr. Robert Davy, brother to Humphry ; Dr. Henry Boase and his son, the geologists ; John Tonkin the president of East India College ; Rev. John James Carne, the antiquary ; Rev. J. H. Batten, the Cambridge mathematician ; and, not least, quiet little Maria Branwell, mother of the Brontës.

A strange place, this Penzance of George the Third ! It had one carpet, and the young Humphry Davy. It had book clubs but not a single silver fork. Again we find the clue in those all-important words "first and last". Remote Penzance had created for itself a kind of frontier culture. As in the New England towns described by Van Wyck Brooks, the people, having to shift for themselves, learnt also to think for themselves and to create their own pattern.

In time the town grew, carpets multiplied, and the pattern weakened until the first quarter of this century found a Penzance not so remote as to be adventurously self-sufficient but remote enough to be stolidly self-centred. Its history, up to about 1920, therefore resembles that of a writer or painter who does his best work when he is young, poor, and unknown and his worst when he is old, rich, famous, and "respectable".

Fortunately, the past twenty years, and notably the past ten, have wrought a great improvement. War rattled the silver forks of respectability and blew away most of the Victorian cobwebs, and so the Penzance of to-day is less ingrown, more alert, and—in the better sense of the word—more easy-going. If a friendly street life is a reliable index to a town's character, we need not worry much about the first and last borough.

To say that Penzance has faults is, after all, only to admit that its inhabitants suffer from human nature. At any rate, the town has the imagination to support a Shakespearian Festival, the energy and vision to build a sub-town at Alverton, and enough intelligent and cultivated people to keep the arts prospering. It is significant that film companies use Penzance as a testing-ground for new movies, on the theory that if a film satisfies Penzance it will satisfy England. Nor can the town be so dull as Edward Garnett supposed. On the contrary, it has a special place in Fleet Street's heart as a town where the unexpected continually occurs ; a characteristic of Penzance ever since it began its history, in the best biblical style, with a flood. Few towns of the size yield so much London news.

If its natural leadership of westernmost Cornwall becomes an official leadership, as may happen in the near future, new responsibility will create new inspiration to carry it forward to a greatness which undoubtedly lies in the future, however often it may turn with pride to the past.

Meanwhile, in the sunny present, I look out at the blue sea and the strolling crowds and some lines from Bernard Shaw enter my mind. "You did not see much of the world in Cornwall, did you?" asks Dr. Ridgeon in *The Doctor's Dilemma*; and Jennifer Dubedat replies, "Oh yes. I saw a great deal every day of the beauty of the world—more than you ever see here in London!" That, I think, is what we in Penzance would say.

CRABBING DAYS

JOHN FREDERIC GIBSON

THE sun is high and warm and the bay is patched with wind and calm, deep blue and white. From my window I can see the stout little crabbers coming and going, weaving wake trails, swinging around their pots. The boats seem part of the scene, and one might think that the men are happy to be out there on the edge of the ebb tide ; but I am an observer, they are in the midst of routine work. The difference is immense.

The cove from which those boats sail is on the eastern side of the Lizard, a place of many colours. When the sun is out the stunted palms are bright against a blue sky and the cottages gleam white and the pine branches cast shadows. Then it is all warmth and brilliance. The orange fungus on the rocks is vivid ; the wild flowers dance above the grasses ; the shallow water is ice green. But when the skies are grey the colour is lost and the place is bleak and cold, as barren as the rocks below Cape Wrath. No day is like another, and each morning look from the window reveals a new mood, a fresh face on the land we think we know so well.

Those who live on the edges of the Cornish cliffs might as well be at sea. Their homes are shaken by the winds. The thatches quiver, and security is threatened. Spary drives against the windows, and then the sun comes out and the waters draw back their strength. The place sleeps. The tide rises and falls and the cottages are becalmed under the incurious stars.

This village is a village of the sea. Coming down the steep hill one turns a corner, and there between the thatches is a vivid blue triangle, and, perhaps, a splash of scarlet geranium. The green tamarisk branches flutter. Down by the beach, near the boats, nets dry in the sun and lobster

pots gleam white where the willow is thick with salt. The smell is one of seaweed and brine and tar and hot paintwork.

To go out to the lobster grounds in the first calm of spring is rather like walking over the grasses of a freshly-sown lawn. There is a sense of triumph. At last, after great preparation and long waiting, the hour has struck. Spring is not just a time for cuckoos and lambs and pretty blossoms—it is the dawn of the year, and, more important, the season of economic rebirth.

We gather on the beach at dawn. The half darkness hides detail, but sounds are clear: the rattle of footsteps on the shingle; the striking of a match; the falling of a crutch on to the bottom-boards, virginal boards, that are, as yet, free from fish scales. There are lights in some of the cottages, and late arrivals are silhouettes in their doorways as they look up at the sky before hurrying down to join in the work.

As the light broadens it is possible to see the cretinous heaps of pots stacked in the bows of each boat, new pots with new gear, the result of four months' labour in the slate-roofed sheds, the result of journeys to the farms where willow paddocks lie, tended carefully, handed down from father to son and from boat to boat. One generation succeeds the other, and the greatest inheritance is knowledge, knowledge of tide and rock, wreck and spur, sand and wind. The older men know the bottom of the bay as they know their cottage floors; they guide the youth with pride and care.

It is cold. The rocks are still holding the chill of winter, and the air stings the bottom of our lungs. As I wait, a dark figure comes over and bangs a bucket of fresh bait into the boat. "Right!" growls a voice. "Off we go!"

Hands come out of the green light, and the boat rocks gently as it slides almost silently towards the water. Then, for the first time for months, the water laps against the keel, and the planking shines in the lustre of daybreak. There is a moment of hesitation, and then we are waterborne, drifting out from the line of foam along the shore. The swell, a reminder of last week's gale, lifts us and drops us. The marine engine stutters into life, zombie-like after its winter's rest, a trifle stiff in the joints.

There is nothing to do for a while but sit and listen to the beat of the engine and feel the growing heat of the rising sun pass through our skins,

to warm our innermost bones. There is time to smoke, time to watch the gannet flying, time to settle comfortably against the transom and dream of outer seas.

On the way out to the lobster grounds, perhaps down below the Lizard Head, perhaps a mile out from Carrig-Luz or west of the tide rip off Black Head, the pots have to be baited, a job which looks easy enough, but that lithe skill of experience is deceptive.

We reach the lobster grounds of our choice, and the engine is throttled back as the pots go over the side. The boat swings in a circle as sixty willow cages splash and sink. We see them in the blue water, swirling downwards, the rope snaking out over the gunwale. And that is all for the first day. The marker bobs on the surface, a little black flag fluttering jauntily. If the weather holds, to-morrow will be the day for reaping the harvest of the sea, dawn to-morrow and dawn on every fine day into mid-December. If a gale blows, the pots will be dragged from the rocks and hurled to deep water or cast up on the beach, smashed and useless. In that case, the work of winter will be undone.

We come gently to the shallow water and run our bows on to the beach. Now the fishermen can wander up to their cottages in search of a late breakfast. For me it is a question of climbing the cliff path and taking a short cut home across the fields in which the small black bullocks stand. As I pass they turn and stare, watching me until I am out of sight behind the tall hedges.

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There are nine crabbers on the beach ; two men to each boat. These crabbers are about twenty-five feet long, broad-beamed and strongly built. Sails and centre-boards are a thing of the past, but the masts which are stepped about two feet forward of the transom are of some practical use. From them it is possible to haul out the triangular mizzen to steady the boat when hauling nets.

Unlike their boats, the fishermen are of all shapes and sizes. They seem to have nothing in common unless it may be strong wrists and a dislike of the taste of crab, and, perhaps, the love of their own village. Some wear blue sweaters and peaked caps, keeping up the old tradition, but there are others who prefer a cloth cap and an old tweed jacket.

As the tides flow later each day, so the boats depart later, and when I go out to haul the nets and lift the pots we are not clear of the beach until well after sunrise. It takes us half an hour to reach the far side of the bay.

Far down the coast other boats are coming out from the next village, their sails black against shining water, the beat of their engines drawing the gulls out from the cliffs. There is time to look around. The smoke from our pipes floats up in the sunlight. The wooden gunwale grows warm under my arm.

There is an unfading excitement about hauling up the bottom nets. We find our flag, its cork float straining in the last of the tide. When the engine is cut, the silence is sudden and immense. We clear our throats and then begin to haul on the wet ropes. For a while there is nothing to see but dripping water, the end of the net, a brown mass. And then a skate slithers inboard, blinking its gills at us. After that six crayfish arrive, one after another, their shells yellow and gleaming. By the time the end of the net is aboard we have eleven crayfish and three skate, not a good catch. There are throaty grumbles, wordless, but full of meaning. In no time at all we are motoring swiftly towards the first string of pots.

Hauling pots is, for me, the best part of the morning's work. I lean over the side and watch them as they come up, shadows below the translucent water, barred shapes, and then detailed cones of willow. Sometimes there is a lobster or crab on the top of the pot, and we haul slowly. Young lobsters advertise their presence by a terrific flapping all over the floor of their prison, but the older ones are always dignified in defeat. Crabs are apparently stunned by their misfortune, and move with a purposeless amble around the pot.

The sun rises ; our sweaters become unnecessary. To the north the white cottages shine like squares of sky. The coastline appears steep and bleak from our seaward viewpoint. This is spring, stimulating and colourful. For me, it is the first of a number of mornings on the bay. For the fishermen, it is the first of the year and the end of the year. Their life is a cycle. Their life is based on the necessity of going out whenever the wind is elsewhere, and the sooner they are home, the better.

But I found that it was possible to go out on the blue waters of that bay a hundred times and still feel like an explorer. It all depended on the colour of the water, the type of fish to be caught, or the simple fact that each day saw the land colours growing more vivid, more contrasting.

Summer trolling is a lazy, peaceful occupation. Now, when bait is so expensive, the crabbers put out spinners on their way home. Mackerel do as well in the pots as anything else. In the midday heat each man can become absorbed in his own thoughts, lulled to a dream by the siesta hour, the throbbing of the engine, the glare on the water which makes

closed eyes seem natural enough. Only the man at the tiller need watch out, and the waters are safe and deep until it reaches the shadows of the cliffs. So each man sits there, worlds apart from the next, one finger alive and alert, awaiting the jerk of a fish on the line. Apart from that finger, bodies relax and minds can wander far and away. There is nothing there that is not immense. The sky is solid, hot and blue ; the sea fades away into a haze ; the land is a remote façade of brown and green, dwindling to east and west ; the boat is small, as are the gulls around, but the boat is forgotten. . . .

Sometimes we caught over sixty fish in no time at all, and would turn to meet the evening shadows, content, our supper at our feet. We would make for the shore, see the boat high and dry above the spring tide mark, and then wander up the empty road, sleepy in the mellow light of evening.

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This kind of thing sounds pleasant enough, but the fishermen are by no means happy. As each year passes prices of willow and rope and bait and paint reach upward, but the amount given for a lobster falls. The hotel industry is not thriving and, in any case, the five shilling meal does not give scope for large helpings of shellfish. The fisherman sees his expenses mounting, boats from two pounds a foot to ten pounds a foot, bundles of willows from ninepence to two shillings, petrol up, tar up, food up, canvas up. It is not any use demanding higher prices for his catch. No merchant would pay more for something that is difficult to sell these days. What, then, is the answer ? Some of the men must work on the farms in the winter months. And that means that there is no one to make the new pots. December to March are profitless to the crabber. He is unable to draw unemployment benefits unless he is prepared to be sent away on a trawler at a moment's notice.

For most Cornish fishing villages there is another problem. House by house, cottage by cottage, the old thatched homes are being bought up by outsiders, and the fishermen and their families are being moved away from the sea to the new council houses. In fifty years time there will be no crabbing as we know it to-day. Between now and then there will be much sadness, much bitterness, in the ineffectual struggle for survival. No great plans and speeches can halt the disintegration of the trade, for such things only hasten the end. Tradition is the strength of the crabbers. New methods of lobster fishing might ensure a catch, but they would black out the dawn lights along the Cornish coast and leave only the husks of villages to which would flow the tide of the city overflow.

Little River at Hemmick

LEAVE Mevagissey for Menagwins,
Pass Gorran School to Four Turnings,
Bear left ; Carvinick and Penare
Will lead through winding ways to where
By a ferny lane you reach
Shingle and sand of Hemmick beach.

Down it a little river flows
Whose name in Gorran no one knows.

Trevessan Bottoms it wanders through,
Bordered with mullein and marsh mallow,
Figwort, and meadow-sweet, tall heads
Of purple loosertrife, flowering beds
Of mint, and cress, and willow-herb,
Hemp agrimony, in a superb
Cluster of kinds. There bindweed throws
Her great white cup, and the wild rose
Puts off her flowers for scarlet hips,
While honeysuckle's gleaming lips
Still lure the dragon-flies ; there drones
Hymn the delights their untoiled bones
Enjoy, while meagre working bees,
Winging fast, the stern decrees
Of the mad hive stupid fulfil.

Here living water flows at will,
Now brown as beer, now flourished green,
Now sun-flecked, and now shadowy seen,
Until it nears the open beach.
Then busy hands contrive to teach
That river a new way to run.
They hold her from the sea for fun
With stony barriers, barricades
Of sand and seaweed built with spades
Of children and of schoolboys tall,
Of Warden and of General,

(For even these delight to make
That river her own self forsake
In sliding shallow and wrinkled pool)
Until comes on the evening cool.
Quiet the beach lies ; then, tranquil,
Water recovers her own will ;
Finds her old passage, down will run,
Catching the lustre of the sun,
Reflecting the o'er-arching sky,
Water to the all-watery,
Little river into the sea.

ANNE TRENEER.

Cornwall

SCORNING thalassic shallows
She sought the western fathoms,
To bear her moors and fallows
To the edge of the sea.

Thrust out her coves and beaches,
Her bracken-covered headlands,
Torn rocks and river reaches—
Endless diversity.

On stone and leaf and scallop,
Came saints of hoary legend ;
Or guiding a light shallop
At dawn of history.

The bold Levantine stranger,
For native ore came trading,
Cleaving through unknown danger,
From Tyre far oversea.

The Roman hordes crossed over
Her barriers of granite ;
Dutch ; Spariard ; pirate rover—
Stole not her majesty.

Sunlight and shade yet dapple,
Hazel and whin and bullace,
Oak, sycamore, crab-apple,
In green variety.

With ancient Cimric story,
Still do her voices deepen,
So we may sense the glory
Of that far melody.

GLADYS HUNKIN.

The Mason's Epitaph

HE was neither prince nor politician,
No priest and no poet,
as the world knows them ; but he was the man
to smooth stones, make each fit

straight to his quoin, and thus used less mortar
than contract masons waste,
with the next job as their present master,
in their slow toil of haste.

He worked no fixed hours, he just came and went
carrying a jug of cold tea ;
He'd stay till he'd used up all his cement,
then leave, with no temerity.

His work was such that each action contained
its own contemplation ;
the more he gave his work, the more he gained
in strict meditation

on stones of infinite shape. He weighed
their neat rigidity. .
Disciplined by working with these, he made
his own philosophy

which was as sound as any Analects,
—at least in application—
all men and things to their own nature fit
with or without salvation.

“Larch is no good for a lintel,” he said,
“It warps young and rots old
true to its nature, and from friends,” he said,
“expect from friends their colds.”

Protected by these exact measurements
he spent his evenings home.
Freed from resentments and disappointment,
married,—to be alone.

His wife a woman of monotonous lust
without one attraction.
He kept her pregnant for he knew this must
increase his recreation.

But to assess his solid character,
words do not weigh enough.
Observe his walls, they maintain his nature ;
see where he smoothed the rough

and how his beam's morticed. Then you will see
that civilization
exists where men work for posterity
and build from sheer passion,

for durability. Prust built that way,
this shippon here proves it.
Living, he gave us this and now we say
He died to no profit.

RONALD DUNCAN.

Theatre

THE MERLIN THEATRE

THE Merlin Theatre belongs to the writer of this article, which is perhaps the simplest explanation for its beginning as a theatre. It aspires to be a home of communal activity for the dramatic arts, creative and imaginative, with no political axe to grind. It aims to keep a high artistic integrity in all its projects, whatever their kind ; to be independent and open-minded in choice of play and production, and to be experimental in all forms of artistic expression.

The Merlin is a small theatre, seating about 180, which derives its name from a rock to the west of Mousehole harbour. It is a converted schoolroom which was abandoned when the new school premises were built. A stage has been built at one end and an emergency exit added, and the roof put into safe structural repair. The stage has an apron, the back wall of the stage is whitewashed and used as a colour reflector. The sets are constructed on a simple architectural pattern, but painted backdrops are sometimes used as in the illustration. Props and details are cut to a minimum, but careful attention is given to scale. The sets are designed in form and colour to make an atmosphere in which the players move and speak. No attempt is made to get naturalistic effects. The costumes are designed and made by the company. Acoustically the theatre is satisfactory and is used regularly for B.B.C. broadcasts of the Mousehole Male Voice Choir.

A year ago when this modest venture was started its hopes and aims were of a colourful nature ; twelve months' experience has sobered its aims and hardened its hopes. It is more real now and less colourful. The human element, the clash of personality, reduced this band of adventurous enthusiasts to a crowd of raucous beings, suspicious of each other, back-biting, embittered, avoiding each other, and, after a year, only too glad to go their several ways ; leaving the theatre with a meagre nucleus of chastened souls, who now walk warily with apprehensive faces !

However, four plays were produced last season, which represents some solid accomplishment as well as some sweat and tears. These four productions included two plays by Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. The opening play was a modern historical one by Clemence Dane, *Will Shakespeare*; and another production was a musical one which included a musical drama by Vaughan-Williams, *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains*. This last, in spite of many shortcomings, made plain how easily can the Cornish act in song. The last production was an adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Christmas Carol, The Reclamation of Ebenezer Scrooge*, which showed an improvement in stagecraft but a sad lack of showmanship.

When a play goes into production the method adopted is direct and creative. The play is first made clear to the entire caste—from the opening to the closing curtain—and his interpretation of the play is explained by the producer. During rehearsals indications rather than definitions are given to the players. These are intended to form the groundwork on which the players themselves use their own imaginative expression. As the rehearsals progress, sparkle and life begin to infuse from one player to another, which becomes a living flame; this flame the producer will fan to a furnace, or dull to a glowing coal, as he requires.

A company of players is now building up which begins to understand the severe limitations peculiar to the small stage, and to work well within these limitations. This company is drawn from Mousehole and the neighbouring district, and works when time can be spared from their everyday jobs. To earn the support of its patrons and become part of the village as representing some vital need, not to be found in mass-produced entertainment, but in their streets and in their living experience of home, is its aspiration.

The theatre is self-supporting and non-profit-making, and its running expenses extremely low, making it possible to produce any play suited to its size, without undue regard for box office returns. The next play to be performed will be a Cornish one, in dialect.

To use that form of dramatic art which all can understand, and to search out that creativeness which exists in Cornish soil, and to give artistic expression to a living experience, and to devote itself to a high integrity of Art and Purpose: these are some of the aims and some of the hopes of the Merlin Players—which have *not* hardened!

GEORGE LAMBOURNE

THE DOLPHIN PLAYERS

The Dolphin Players, a repertory company which was successfully established at Newquay during 1948, is hoping to return and resume its activities shortly. The policy of the company and its directorate is modelled on that of the Dublin Gate Theatre ; this envisages the establishment in the West-country of an Art Theatre in the best sense of the expression, to provide entertainment of integrity and value to the cultural life of the Duchy. It is designed to give a hearing to the new play ; the costume play ; and to the foreign translation. Last season were presented, among others, Shaw's *Candida*, Bridie's *Tobias and the Angel*, Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, and the first English presentation of Sacha Guitry's comedy, *Le Nouveau Testament*.

Future programming includes *Macbeth*, *Mary Rose*, and the Jean Jaques Bernard play, *Martine* ; Tchekov will be represented by *Uncle Vanya* ; and Ibsen by *The Master Builder* ; and it is hoped to include a comedy by Molière as well as one specially written for the company and hitherto unperformed. The company will again include Peter Ashby-Bailey, Prudence Clayton, Margaret Lloyd, and Kenneth Williams, already known to Cornish audiences, and also Elizabeth London from York and the West End, and Diana Vernon of the Dublin Gate Theatre. Richard West will again direct production, which ensures a maintenance of both policy and standard. This is a challenging programme, but it is believed that it will be welcomed and appreciated by the people of Cornwall, who have already proved their tremendous belief in good theatre.

THE ENGLISH RING ACTORS

The English Ring Actors at Penzance Pavilion have nearly reached their third anniversary, playing continuous repertory except for an annual vacation at the beginning of each year. This is believed to be the longest run of any repertory company.

The company is non-profit distributing and exempt from entertainment tax. It is under the management of Frank Barnes and Elizabeth Gilbert.

Apart from the tax relief, the company receive no State or Municipal aid whatever, and are not in association with the Arts Council. The ambition of the management is to get the company on to a basis whereby

each play can be played (and rehearsed) for two weeks instead of one. The Arts Council has been very helpful in the efforts that have been made to achieve this ambition, as have been the Town Council and the Chamber of Commerce in Penzance. It is hoped that during 1949 arrangements can be made with some neighbouring town so that two companies can be run, or an interchanging arrangement made with some similar company.

The English Ring Actors have a thriving Playgoers' Club which meets every fortnight during the winter months. The possibility of running a school unit to introduce the legitimate theatre to schools all over the county is being discussed with the County Education Authorities. Apart from plays, an old-fashioned pantomime, written specially for children, is presented each Christmas. The popularity of these Christmas shows may be judged by the fact that about twelve thousand people visit the theatre during the two-weeks' run.

THE AVON PLAYERS

With the Princess Pavilion, Falmouth, as their headquarters, and working in association with the Arts Council of Great Britain, the Avon Players Repertory Company has been to the forefront in bringing good class repertory to Cornwall. In the past two years its companies have performed frequently at Perranporth, Helston, St. Ives, Penzance, St. Austell, Mevagissey, Wadebridge and other centres, in addition to providing regular repertory programmes at Falmouth. During 1948 an associated company, the Severn Players, also performed at Falmouth and other centres, and there was also, for a period, an exchange of plays with the English Ring Actors at Penzance.

During the winter the Avon Players have carried out, under Arts Council direction, an extensive tour of South Wales, the Midlands and the South-East of England. They returned to Falmouth to present their usual pantomime season and now, after a short break, are opening their 1949 season at the Princess Pavilion with a strengthened company, headed by Adrian Stanley and Barbara New. The Severn Players will also be operating from Falmouth.

Art

PAINTING IN CORNWALL

AT an Extraordinary General Meeting of the St. Ives Society of Artists on February 5th, 1949, called by ten Members, a split which has been threatening for some years took place, broadly between the more progressive and the conservative elements.

As a result, seventeen Members of the St. Ives Society of Artists have resigned. They, and a number of supporters, called a meeting together to form a new Society, such as was visualized by the late Borlase Smart, which will aim at presenting exhibitions of the most vital art and craftsmanship, regardless of label, in the Penwith area of Cornwall. It has been decided to call the Society—The Penwith Society of Arts in Cornwall.

Herbert Read, D.S.O., M.C., Hon. Litt.D., has consented to be its President, and the foundation Members are: Shearer Armstrong, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Sven Berlin, David Cox, A.R.W.A. (Hon. Secretary), Agnes Drey, Leonard Fuller, R.O.I., R.C.A. (Chairman), Isobel Heath, Barbara Hepworth, Marion Grace Hocken, F.Z.S., F.R.E.S., Peter Lanyon, Bernard Leach, Denis Mitchell, Guido Morris, Marjorie Mostyn, Dicon Nance, Robin Nance, Ben Nicholson, Herbert Read, H. Segal, John Wells.

Cornwall has for many years been the home of artists. Since the days when J. M. W. Turner visited St. Ives in 1815 it has given to the world artists with views as far apart as Christopher Wood and Algernon Talmage. To-day it continues to produce painters of many diverse views, but perhaps there is now a more common link than hitherto. This link may be described as an aesthetic value—an expression of an element of Cornwall. One is particularly conscious of this in the work of the abstract artists, where the contact is made direct to the mind of the beholder without the distraction of photographic realism, or where the subject is allowed to live without insistence. For instance, there is a common link of expression with artists such as Fleetwood-Walker and Peter Lanyon

which may not at first be apparent. This lies in the implication of the subject rather than its over-statement ; and thus we can follow a logical sequence in the very apparent influence which is exerted by Ben Nicholson on Lanyon and Wells, who again draw their constructivist inspiration from the eloquence of Naum Gabo.

Due to this common link the work of Cornish artists, and particularly the St. Ives colony, is now perhaps more vital than ever before. Evidence of this has been provided in the past year at the regular exhibitions of the St. Ives Society of Artists at the Art Gallery, St. Ives, at the exhibitions of the Crypt Group, St. Ives, and at a series of individual shows held at Downing's Bookshop, St. Ives.

Visitors to the exhibitions of the St. Ives Society of Artists will have seen from the pictures that the Society is catholic in its outlook. As one would expect from a Society having its home on the Atlantic, there are a number of marine artists who derive inspiration from the ocean and the rugged Cornish cliffs. Landscape painters have a choice from quiet pastures to wild, sinister spaces. Nevertheless, in recent times there has been a marked increase in portrait and figure painting.

The Society held four local exhibitions during 1948, and these were very well attended. The exhibitions owed much of their quality to the work of such painters as Lamorna Birch, John A. Park, whose canvasses never fail to show true artistry, Stanley Spencer, Marcella Smith, Dorothea Sharp, S. H. Gardiner, Jeanne du Maurier, with her delightful sensitivity and feeling for the expression of atmosphere and brilliant colour, Midge Bruford, another sensitive painter whose work shows extreme delicacy of handling, Mary Millar Watt, Fred Bottomley, Dorothy Bayley and L. E. Walsh, a fine portrait painter of artistic integrity.

In addition to its general exhibitions, the Society has recently held a number of one-man shows, including those of the work of H. Segal and H. K. Jillard. The Crypt Group Exhibition was held in August in the Crypt of the Art Gallery, being opened by Francis Watson of the British Council. The exhibitors were Sven Berlin, W. Barns-Graham, Peter Lanyon, John Wells, Bryan Wynter, David Houghton, Adrian Ryan, Patrick Heron, and Guido Morris. Another feature of the Society's activities has been the holding of exhibitions of travelling loan collections—notably the Albertina Collection, oldest and most important of the great collections of prints of the past, including the works of Durer, Leonardo

da Vinci, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Titian, etc. A Memorial Exhibition of the work of Frances Hodgkins, who spent some time painting in St. Ives, was very popular.

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The large contribution which the members of the St. Ives Art Colony make to the important exhibitions in this country and abroad is perhaps far greater than is generally known. It is interesting to consider that during the period 1948-49 dealt with in these notes well over 1,000 pictures have been exhibited by members in exhibitions *outside* St. Ives.

Artists from Cornwall were well represented in the Paris Salon, 1948, which proved to be a show rivalling in excellence those of pre-war years. The exhibitors included Marion Grace Hocken, well known for her flower paintings ; Frank Jameson, with a characteristic painting of boats ; Marjorie Mostyn, who excels in her portrayal of youth ; Tangye Reynolds and Leonard Richmond.

In London there has been a strong Cornish representation at exhibitions of the Royal Academy, the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, the Royal Society of British Artists, and the New English Art Club. At the R.O.I. Exhibition notable features were Leonard Fuller's interesting figure painting, Pauline Hewitt's lovely colour, Leonard Richmond's grey landscape, like a sensitive little Corot, and Fleetwood-Walker's artistry in his painting of the nude. Also impressive were the works of Constance Bradshaw, Arthur Burgess, Marjorie Mostyn, Frank Jameson, Bernard Nannes, Dorothea Sharp, W. Todd-Brown, and Norman Wilkinson.

Among individual shows, Dod Proctor's exhibition at the Adams Gallery was well received. Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth have again added to their many successful one-man exhibitions at the Lefevre Gallery ; sculptings of Miss Hepworth's have also been a feature of the modern exhibitions at Battersea Park and the Institute of Contemporary Art. Two of the younger artists, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham and Bryan Wynter, have each had encouraging shows at the Redfern Gallery. Misomè Peile, whose first London exhibition is being held this spring, had a series of her theatre décor designs (for the Adelphi Players) exhibited at the Manchester City Art Gallery.

DAVID COX

BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

ALFRED WALLIS. *By Sven Berlin.* Nicholson & Watson, £1. 1s.

"Why trouble about this dirty old man?" asked a Relieving Officer. The other old men in the workhouse where Alfred Wallis spent the last year of his life would put their fingers to their temples and screw them round to show that they thought him crazy. So thought some of his neighbours in St. Ives, where he lived his last seventeen years alone in a condition of poverty and filth. In the daytime he painted naïve pictures on old scraps of cardboard, at night he raved and shouted in defiance of strange spirits and voices which he believed to be agents of the Devil, inhabiting his upper room. By conventional standards Wallis was perhaps mad, certainly "queer". So were Van Gogh, William Blake, John Clare, Kit Smart, and many other great artists and writers of the past. In his lifetime Van Gogh, the most obvious parallel, was shunned and scorned by the art critics and the public. He ended his days in a lunatic asylum. Yet to-day his pictures fetch thousands of pounds, are exhibited at the Tate Gallery, and have exerted a tremendous influence on painting since his time.

Is it possible that Alfred Wallis, a simple Cornish fisherman, who started to paint at the age of seventy because he was lonely after his wife's death, may occupy a similar place in the history of art? Traditional painters have laughed at Wallis' primitive, childlike paintings and drawings. A few modern artists, notably Ben Nicholson and the late Christopher Wood, seeing in the casual scraps of cardboard the touch of genius, have done what they could to bring it to the notice of the public. But it is only now, with the appearance of a full-length biography, illustrated with sixty-seven reproductions of Wallis' paintings, many in colour, that it becomes possible to make a fair judgment. Sven Berlin, a young sculptor and painter who lives in Wallis' home town, has little doubt. He sees

Wallis as a man of genius, thwarted through most of his life by ignorance, economic pressure and the tyranny of a primitive religion, yet triumphant in the end through the self-expression of his paintings. "With a poet's imagination he creates for us new images, forms, carrying new experience and meaning", writes Berlin, and he estimates Wallis as the outstanding example of a primitive painter in modern times. But he also warns the reader that all judgment of Wallis' work must necessarily be made with this fact in mind. It is a fair warning. For Wallis was a humble man, close to sea and earth, who saw things directly and simply. It was his unusual quality that, though he had no more technical equipment than a child, he managed to communicate in quite an original way the peculiar flavour of life at sea in the days of sailing boats, and of the fishing communities of Cornwall. He captures, as anyone who studies the illustrations of this book cannot fail to feel, what Sven Berlin appropriately terms "the entire peculiar otherness of life at sea".

Alfred Wallis may have been mad, may have been a morose and cantankerous old man, but he has given something to painting in Britain which more experienced and intellectualized artists would be unwise to ignore. If they want an imaginative interpretation of Wallis' life, as well as a comprehensive introduction to his work, they cannot do better than read this book. It is written with a loving and sensitive sympathy that more than compensates for an occasional tendency to over-dramatize quite ordinary incidents. In particular, Sven Berlin is to be congratulated on capturing in words something of the poetry and mystery of the Celtic background which exerts so important an influence on the work not only of Wallis but of all artists in Cornwall.

DENYS VAL BAKER

BEN NICHOLSON : PAINTINGS, RELIEFS AND DRAWINGS.

Lund Humphries, £3. 3s.

The beachcomber's journeys are discovery. His objects are found, that is their significance. In this way Ben Nicholson's paintings are discoveries. They are objects and they happen to be there, why and by what authority does not matter.

In this book of Nicholson's paintings, reliefs, and drawings the reviewer is presented with problems of abstract art and existentialism. They are raised by Herbert Read in the Introduction. The significance of the book

does not lie in this, however. The orchestration of artist and publisher has given a quality of personal statement which has been almost lost since the days of hand-made books. I remember the "flicker" photographs of tennis players which brought action and movement to a sequence of shots: a sort of private cinema. Though I would hesitate to flick the pages of this weighty book, a sense of a whole experience follows the closing. It is this quality in the book which preserves the discovery sense of the artist's work; an interpretation of this sense into a sequence, a telescoping of time. Reliefs in the middle of the book give a curious security, the journey having reached regions of space and time, a sense of lunar aloofness prevails. Though a parachute could hardly bring us back to earth, in this imaginative world of book I remember a painting by Kit Wood of a zebra and parachute which seems to be a forerunner of Nicholson's later paintings. He has landed in Penwith, the end county of Cornwall, among mugs and tables, boats and flags. What will he find on the beach there?

PETER LANYON

CORNISH YEARS. *By Anne Treneer.* Jonathan Cape, 12s. 6d.

"I have missed much of all I might have seen of the loveliness of the world through an irresistible craving for Cornwall. To think that if I had spent every fresh second of my days looking at a fresh glory I could not have exhausted all glories, and that I have hardly looked beyond the first I knew, coming back again and again to what was familiar! Sometimes I am sorry; and sometimes I wish I had been narrower still, desiring not all Cornwall, but merely all Penwith or all Roseland, merely all St. Austell Deanery, merely all Gorran parish, merely our own garden, merely one foot of hedge in it. I sometimes think I could have spent all my life looking at one violet." There, in a rather long quotation from her new book, is captured that questing quality which is one of Anne Treneer's most endearing assets as a writer and, one imagines, as a person. In an earlier book, *School House in the Wind*, Miss Treneer wrote vividly and lovingly about her childhood at Gorran and Caerhays, near St. Austell. Now, in personal reminiscences covering the years 1906 to 1932, she continues her autobiography with an account of her long apprenticeship to teaching and writing at Truro, Exeter, Liverpool, and Oxford. There is much wise comment upon methods of teaching, as well as some well-written character studies, but the major concern is with the beauty and fascination of Cornwall. Latterly, circumstances have compelled Miss

Treener to live away from the Duchy, but this exile only enhances the intensity of frequent reunions. And very successfully does Miss Treener convey this intensity of feeling, particularly in the chapters "North Cliffs and Godrevy", "On the Towans" [at Hayle], and "West Penwith". One awaits with pleasure the next instalment.

VALENTINE EAMES

THE ROAD WAS FREE. *By Frank Baker.* Boardman, 7s. 6d.

Although ostensibly an account of a hitch-hiking journey from Cornwall up to Barra in the Hebrides, this new book by the author of *The Downs So Free*, *Embers*, *Miss Hargreaves*, etc., contains a great deal of special interest to Cornish readers. The first and last chapters are set in the author's home village of Mevagissey, and even through the Industrial North, or far away in the Highlands of Scotland, thoughts of Cornwall and Cornish people are constantly straying into the narrative.

A visit to Father Sandys Wason at Pontefract, on the return journey, is sufficient excuse for an amusing chapter of reminiscences about this famous eccentric. As Frank Baker writes, twelve years ago it was impossible to be living in West Cornwall without knowing the name of Sandys Wason of Cury-cum-Gunwalloe, a parish in the Lizard Peninsula. Father Wason is still alive, living in the East End of London, a fascinating subject for biography: it is to be hoped that before long Mr. Baker may expand his short study into a full-length book.

Hitch-hiking as an art became extremely popular during the war years, when thousands who would normally not dream of using such an unorthodox mode of transport came to accept it as an everyday necessity. There has always been an exclusive minority, however, who deliberately travel in this way. With this baptism, Frank Baker and his wife have now, as he says, joined the ranks of the professionals. The aim of the nineteen-days' journey was not only a desire to see Barra, but also a secret urge to recapture the sense of adventure which is so often lost with youth. Adventure there is in plenty, and it is entertainingly if somewhat carelessly recorded here in a book which the author says has given him as much joy to write as the adventure itself. Coming back to Mevagissey, he reflects: "In nineteen days we had travelled some 1,700 miles in thirty-five different vehicles, to say nothing of odd trams and 'buses

and boats. We had seen some very remarkable and splendid places ; yet none were so beautiful as this, and we had to go away to realize it." And he advises all couples approaching middle age to embark on a similar adventure as a means of widening their understanding and re-establishing a truer sense of values.

HENRY TREVOR

THE INTERVENERS. *By Wallace Nichols.* Newman Wolsey, 8s. 6d.

Those who keep *Prometheus in Piccadilly* and *The Song of Sharruk* in the nook reserved for their special discoveries will be pleased at the news that Professor Cleanth Brooks, known here for his *Modern Poetry and The Traditions*, has been lecturing at Yale on the poetry of Wallace Nichols, who lives at Newlyn. American cities are, on the whole, more aware and appreciative than our own, and it will serve us right if we have to learn from them the true worth of this very considerable poet and novelist. Already, one imagines, the Untermeyers and Fadimans "have their eyes" on Newlyn's Mr. Nichols ; and perhaps after *The Interveners* Hollywood will glance in the same direction—for this latest novel from Mr. Nichols' pen is a finely inventive piece of story-telling. As a person may step from one room into another, the author quits the New Testament world of "Simon Magus" for the Europe of 1825. It is typical of his scholarly impishness that he should introduce us to one of history's marginal characters, the eagle-like mother of Napoleon, and should do so by way of a feud in Corsica, one of those numerous vendettas which made Napoleon's island home anything but monotonous. In Corsica the neighbours, instead of refusing to speak to one another for twenty years, like villagers in Cornwall, sought the more drastic settlement of eliminating one another, often by ingenious means—an old custom that is still, to some extent, respected there.

The Interveners, then, is above all a narrative ; but we are not allowed to forget that the ingenious Mr. Nichols is a poet and stylist. His style has hardened since he wrote *Torryzany* sixteen years ago, and no longer embarrasses us with over-emphasis and a weight of adjectives. None the less, he is capable of more profound work than this, and might well be advised to abide his time for the maturing of the really great book which we expect from him—a book, we like to hope, with a contemporary Cornish background. It would be a pity if, like Eden Philpotts, he were to pay the penalty of having written too much.

J. H. MARTIN

THE WIDENING MIRROR. *By Denys Val Baker.*

Sampson Low, 8s. 6d.

The Widening Mirror is Denys Val Baker's third novel. There is little doubt that it is also his best. At first glance Mr. Val Baker's three novels have little in common. In *The White Rock* the novelist responded to the invitation of a haunting Welsh landscape by drilling on the nerves of his readers with a theme of child madness. In Cornwall, which was the scene of his second novel, *The More We Are Together*, Mr. Val Baker extracted considerable fun out of a community of simple lifers harassed by the attentions of a Cornish Resistance (against England) Movement. Sombre in Wales, gay in Cornwall, in placid Buckinghamshire, among mangold clamps and mustard fields, although the novelist has suppressed the Celt altogether, he has nevertheless enlarged on the enormous liking and respect for individual people that stirred beneath the surface of his two earlier novels. Here, in fact, is a genuine case of a writer insisting through thick and thin on the necessity for human love at all times and in all circumstances. Owing little to environment, save as a solid background for its characters, *The Widening Mirror* takes a number of very big steps towards a goal which, in a third novel, the writer is now ready to acknowledge openly. The book suffers from a prose style that is careless of precision and, at times, contemptuous of grammar. But it has, above all, a steadfastness of purpose admirably sustaining a theme which, in these days of intolerance, needs some courage to propound.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

THE HEART OF THE STREET. *By John Frederic Gibson.*

Sampson Low, 8s. 6d.

John Gibson's second novel tells the story of the inhabitants of a street in a small coastal town and of the people who form the main influences on the life of his young hero, Michael Venner. There is Patrick, his boyhood friend; Charles Scott, a disorientated novelist, and his family; Leo, a shadowy and philosophic *femme fatale* who settles in the Scott *ménage*, and Vicky, the "bad" girl of the district. Seeking to escape the stifling atmosphere of his own home, Michael goes to sea for five years, and returns, still haunted by his early environment, to marry Anna Scott, with whom he hopes to share his dream of spiritual and physical liberty. His disillusion comes with the discovery that his conception of freedom is irreconcilable with his own nature and the nature of the world he lives in.

A story with interesting possibilities, and the opening promises well. But the development is a little disappointing. The characters too often seem half realized and inconsistent, and the emotions which rack them, instead of arising out of real and desperate human situations express, on the whole, little more than the arid hankerings of adolescence. One feels that the author is not quite clear as to what sort of people his creatures really are, and has failed to distinguish between the sort of literary imagination which springs from contemplation and experience and that which is an attempt to tie a story on to the writer's own emotional changes with its roots, not in the outside world but in his own private dream. The author, although capable of a keen and at times exciting insight into personality, needs to draw many more of his deductions from genuine observation. However, a story is told, and a place convincingly portrayed. Mr. Gibson has undoubted powers of visual description and understands well how to create the atmosphere of natural things. He enjoys people and has the essential quality of enthusiasm.

PATRICIA DALY

THE CORNISH REVIEW

CONTRIBUTIONS dealing with aspects of Cornish life and culture, also short stories, poems and original paintings or woodcuts, will be considered by the Editor. MSS. should not be more than 2,500 words in length, and must be accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

- R. MORTON NANCE. Born 1873, at Cardiff. A painter and also student of ship history, being author of *Sailing-ship Models* (1924) and of many illustrated articles in the *Mariner's Mirror*. His main activity, however, has been work in connection with the revival and strengthening of Cornish and Celtic movements. Author of the *Cornish-English Dictionary* (1938) and numerous pamphlets and plays, including *An Balores* (*The Chough*) and *Lyver an Pymh Marthus Seleven* (*Book of the Five Miracles of Seleven*). He is President of the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, Editor of the Society's journal *Old Cornwall*, and Grand Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd.
- C. C. VYVYAN. Born in Australia. Her mother was Cornish and she herself has lived in Cornwall since the age of two. After winning with distinction a Social Science Degree (London School of Economics), she travelled widely—including a journey with one other woman to the Arctic Circle, up Rat River with Indian guides and over the Divide into Klondike country by a route only once before traversed by a white woman. Married in 1929 to Colonel Sir Courtney Vyvyan, C.M.G., C.B., D.L., J.P., tenth baronet of Treloarwarren, Cornwall. Author, under maiden name of C. C. Rogers, of *Cornish Silhouettes* and *Echoes in Cornwall* (Bodley Head). Under her married name of C. C. Vyvyan she has written extensively for national magazines, and also published an anthology on birds, *Bird Symphony* (John Murray), *Gwendra Cove* (Jordan), and her latest book *Our Cornwall* (Westaway Books Ltd.), out in 1948.
- A. L. ROWSE. Born 1903 at St. Austell and educated at St. Austell Elementary and Council Schools, afterwards winning a scholarship to Christ Church, Oxford. Lecturer of Merton College from 1927-31, and at London School of Economics from 1931-5, and now at All Souls College, Oxford. An outstanding figure in contemporary Cornish literature, he has achieved a national reputation as a historian and as a poet. Among his publications of special interest to Cornish readers are *Sir Richard Grenville of the 'Revenge'*, *Tudor Cornwall*, *Poems of a Decade*, *A Cornish Childhood*, *Poems Chiefly Cornish*, *Poems of Deliverance* and *West-country Stories*. He has also written many authoritative history books, among the most recent being *The Use of History* and *The End of an Epoch*.

JACK R. CLEMO. Born 1916, at St. Stephen, St. Austell, where he has lived all his life. Related through his father, a kiln worker, to the Cornish novelists Joseph and Silas K. Hocking. He received no formal education after the age of twelve, when he left Trethosa village school through a temporary attack of blindness. Well known to Cornish readers as the author of humorous dialect tales in the Annual Almanacks published at Truro, Camborne, and Penzance during the 'thirties. Now known to a much wider public through the appearance in 1948 of his first novel, *Wilding Graft* (Chatto & Windus). His autobiography, *Confession of a Misfit*, will shortly be published.

FRANCES BELLERBY. Born at Bristol, but since early childhood has spent a large part of her time in Cornwall, and has lived here since 1934. Although author of a novel, *Hath the Rain a Father* (1947), and two books of short stories, *Come To An End* (1939) and *The Acorn and the Cup* (1948), she prefers to work entirely at poetry. Her first volume of poems, *Plash Mill*, named after her home at Upton Cross, Callington, appeared in 1947, and is being followed by a second volume. All her books are published by Peter Davies Ltd., except *Come to An End*, published by Methuen Ltd.

R. GLYNN GRYLIS. Comes of an old Cornish family from Lanreath, near Looe. Educated at Queen's College, Harley Street, the first college for women (of which she wrote the centenary history last year) and at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. She has published two biographies, *Mary Shelley* (1938) and *Claire Clairmont* (1939), and two new books are in preparation, *Trelawny*, another biography, and a King Penguin, *The Coast of Cornwall*. She has broadcast biographical talks on the B.B.C. West Regional, taken part in the "Books and Authors" Programme on the Light Service, and also spoken on the Third Programme. She reviews for *Time and Tide* and the *Sunday Times*. In private life she is the wife of Sir Geoffrey Mander, ex-M.P. for Wolverhampton, and has one son and one daughter.

E. W. MARTIN. Born in Devon—but writes that he is not to be regarded as an enemy of Cornwall on that account! He has lectured and done talks and programmes for the B.B.C. West Regional and also contributed articles on writers of the region to the *West Country Magazine*. Has just completed a book on Devon, Cornwall and Somerset which will be published by Phoenix House. Began his tour of personal exploration at the Land's End and tried to find two Cornwalls—the Cornwall of tradition and the Cornwall of industry. Editor of *In Search of Faith*, *The New Spirit*, and *The Countryman's Chap-Book*, an annual miscellany, and of a projected series of books on English county worthies.

P. A. LANYON ORGILL. Born 1924, descended from several notable Cornish families. After four years in the Royal Navy is now at Balliol College, Oxford. Travelled widely in Europe, India, Middle and Far East, East Indies and Arctic regions, and has made a special study of languages, especially of Celtic, Romance, and Germanic. Author of several books and articles on Oriental languages.

WILHELMINA BARNS-GRAHAM. Born at St. Andrews, Fife, she began studying art at age of nineteen in Edinburgh College of Art, took her diploma in drawing and painting and later won a two-years' maintenance scholarship and vocation scholarships to London and Paris. In 1937 she was awarded a post-graduate scholarship for travel abroad, and in 1940 a special maintenance grant for three years under the supervision of the Edinburgh College of Art. It was then she came to work in St. Ives, Cornwall, where she has remained ever since. Her paintings have been exhibited by the Royal Scottish Academy, the Society of Scottish Artists, the Fine Art Society of Edinburgh, the St. Ives Society of Artists, and the Crypt Group of St. Ives. She has also been represented in the C.E.M.A. Exhibition "Living Scottish Artists", and in travelling exhibitions for schools. In her work she concentrates on the Cornish landscape and abstract art, being particularly interested in the grey colours of the granite in Penwith. She feels there is a close affinity between the Celtic atmosphere of Scotland and Cornwall.

JOHN A. PARK. Although a Lancastrian by birth, he has lived a great part of his life in St. Ives, Cornwall, where he has executed many of his finest paintings. His landscapes and sea paintings have been widely issued as postcard reproductions and he is probably the best known of the traditional St. Ives painters. A member of the Royal Academy, his works are hung in galleries in London and the provinces as well as overseas. He is a leading member of the St. Ives Society of Artists.

BEN NICHOLSON. Born at Uxbridge, Middlesex, the son of Sir William Nicholson and his wife, Mabel Pryde, both important painters of their generation. After an academic training he broke away and became interested, in 1918, in the cubist movement, being particularly influenced by Wyndham Lewis, Picasso and Mondrian. Since then he has become one of the leading figures in the field of abstract painting, and his works are exhibited in galleries in U.S.A., Britain and other European countries. He believes that "abstraction is the liberation of colour and form as a means of expression". For many years he has lived at Carbis Bay, St Ives, and his recent work has reflected a strong influence of the Cornish landscape and atmosphere. A large retrospective exhibition of his work was held in London in 1947, and at the end of 1948 Lund Humphries issued a de luxe volume of reproductions of his works. A smaller volume has been issued in the Penguin series.

JOHN ARMSTRONG. Born in 1893, and educated at St. Paul's School, and served in the R.F.A. 1914-18. He has had one-man exhibitions at the Leicester Galleries in 1927 and 1929, and at the Lefevre Galleries in 1938, 1945 and 1947. Although widely known as a painter, he has also executed many designs for the theatre and cinema. Has lived for many years in Cornwall, and at present is at Lamorna Cove.

BARBARA HEPWORTH. Born at Wakefield, Yorkshire. After studying at Leeds School of Art and the Royal College of Art, London, she won a travelling scholarship to Italy, where she lived for three years. A retrospective exhibition of her sculpture was held at Temple Newsam, Leeds, in 1944. The most recent exhibition of her sculpture was at Lefevre Gallery, London, in 1946. An exhibition of paintings and drawings was held at the Lefevre Gallery in 1948, and work by her was exhibited at the Battersea Park Sculpture Exhibition in 1948 and at the Institute of Contemporary Art Exhibitions in London in 1948 and 1949. Her work, in particular her sculptures,

have been the subject of numerous critical studies in magazines, and in 1946 Faber & Faber published a study in book form in their Ariel Books on Art. She has exhibited in France, Holland, and America, and has works in the following British public collections: Manchester City Art Gallery, Wakefield Art Gallery, Birmingham City Art Gallery, Leeds City Art Gallery, and Temple Newsam, Leeds. During her long residence at Carbis Bay she has contributed to the exhibitions of the St. Ives Society of Artists. She is a member of the Committee of the new Penwith Society of Arts in Cornwall.

ALFRED WALLIS. A Cornish fisherman, born in 1855, who only started to paint for the first time at the age of seventy. For seventeen years, living alone in a tiny cottage in St. Ives, he produced paintings of extraordinary beauty and feeling. He died in August 1942, at Madron Workhouse. His paintings were mostly done on cardboard the width of cardboard boxes he obtained at a grocer's shop, and they were usually executed in boat paint. He has been described as the outstanding example of a Primitive painter in modern times. "Though he had no more technical equipment than a child, he managed to communicate in his paintings the peculiar flavour of life at sea in the day of the sailing boats, and of the fishing communities in St. Ives and Mousehole", writes his biographer Sven Berlin in a new book, *Alfred Wallis*, just published by Nicholson & Watson.

TOM EARLY. Born 1914, in South China, where his father was a doctor. He has Cornish connections on his mother's side going back many years, and has lived at Falmouth, Newquay, and Redruth, as well as St. Ives, where he now resides. Took up medicine and practised during the war, but illness forced him to give up this work in 1946. It was only then that he took up painting—previously he had been more interested in music and writing, a fact which he feels supports his theory that the arts are interconnected at a deep level of the mind, but not superficially, rather like several rivers running into one sea. His work is greatly influenced by the Cornish countryside, more particularly by the sombre, deserted mines and industries than by the coast. As a painter he works in close collaboration with Denis Mitchell, with whom he shared an exhibition in 1947, and again in 1948, both in St. Ives.

SVEN BERLIN. Born 1911, at Sydenham, London. Swedish father and English mother. Educated at St. Winifred's, Kenley, Crystal Palace Engineering School, Zelia Raye School of Dancing, London, and Redruth Art School. For many years had a successful career as a stage dancer, then gave it up to become a painter. Came to St. Ives about 1938, and has lived there ever since, though away three years during the war serving in the R.A. and R.E.C.C.E. Regiments in the invasion of France. In recent years has turned increasingly to sculpting, which he feels to be his natural medium. Exhibitions of his work have been held at the Lefevre and St. George's Galleries, London, at Manchester, and at Downing's Bookshop, St. Ives, and the St. Ives Art Gallery. One of the earliest members of the Crypt Group, he is a founder member of the new Penwith Society of Arts in Cornwall. Author of many poems and essays on art and of *Alfred Wallis* (Nicholson & Watson). In addition to sculpting projects, he is now working on three new books: *Disturbance in the West*, a history of an aspect of creative development in Cornwall; *Notebooks of an OP|ACK*; and *Ben Blossom*, an autobiography.

J. H. MARTIN. Born 1914, at Heamoor, Penzance. For many years has worked on the editorial staff of *The Cornishman*, and also contributed to other publications. He has specialized in writing about the literary, artistic, and antiquarian aspects of Cornwall, and estimates that he has written millions of words on the subjects. He writes that he "knows all the more notorious people who have lived in Cornwall during the past twenty years, largely as the result of a youth misspent at parties in Mousehole and St. Ives". Now lives at Trezelah, near Chysanster, with his wife—an American and former scholar of Harvard and Oxford—and three small children.

JOHN FREDERIC GIBSON. Born of an Irish father and an American mother, he spent most of his childhood holidays in Cornwall. From the age of seventeen to nineteen he worked on Finnish sailing ships going to and from Australia. During the war he served in the British Navy, mostly in submarines. After working in a literary agency in London, he settled in Cadgwith on the Lizard, where he wrote his first two novels, *The Bright and the Dark* and *The Heart of the Street*. He now lives near Helston, and is working on an autobiography. He is married, and his wife is an artist.

ANNE TRENEER. Born and brought up in Gorran and the neighbouring parish of Caerhays. By profession a teacher, she is also well known as an author, and has written extensively about Cornish life in various periodicals. Her books include *The Sea in English Literature*, *Charles M. Doughty*, *This World's Bliss*, and an autobiography, *School House in the Wind*. This is continued in a new book, *Cornish Years*, just published by Jonathan Cape, which was made a Book Society Non-Fiction Choice. After having travelled intensively all over Cornwall, she feels that West Penwith, "a little Cornwall in itself", has perhaps most to offer. At present she is living at Exmouth.

GLADYS HUNKIN. Born in Cornwall of an old Cornish family (an ancestor being the first Mayor of Liskeard when Elizabeth granted the Charter in 1586; another was Governor of the Scilly Islands in 1651). Educated in Ireland at the Methodist College, Belfast, and later attended Penzance School of Art. Member of Cornwall Bird Watching and Preservation Society. She has written over three hundred poems, and has been awarded the Poetry Society's 'Premium'. Her sonnet on Humphry Davy gained first place in the Cornish Gorsedd Poem Competition, 1939. She is a Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd.

RONALD DUNCAN. For many years has farmed at Morwenstow in North Cornwall, and has written about his experiences in *Journal of a Husbandman* (Faber & Faber) and in regular articles in the *Evening Standard* and farming papers. For many years edited his own literary magazine *Townsmen* (later *Scythe*). Well known as a poet and playwright, notable among his works being *This Way to the Tomb*, a masque and ante-masque that has been widely performed here and abroad, *The Dull Ass's Hoof*, *Postcard to Pulcenella*, *Home Made Home* and *Ben Johnson*. Wrote the libretto of, Benjamin Britten's second opera, *The Rape of Lucretia*.

GEORGE LAMBOURNE. Born 1900, at London. He served in the Royal Naval Service in the First World War and with the British Red Cross at Dunkirk and the Eighth Army in Africa and Italy in the Second World War. A painter by profession, he has lived in Mousehole, Cornwall, since 1934. Two exhibitions of his paintings have been in London, and work has been purchased by the Tate Gallery and the National Collection of War Pictures. In addition to founding the Merlin Theatre, Mousehole, about which he writes in this issue, he is prominent in other village activities.

DAVID COX. Born 1914, at Falmouth. Studied in England and on the Continent, and has exhibited at the R.A., Paris Salon, New English Art Club, R.O.I., Royal West of England Academy, National Society, the Leicester Gallery, Leger Gallery, Marlborough Gallery, and many provincial galleries in this country. His first one-man show was held in London in 1947. A member of the Royal West of England Academy and other societies, he was until recently Secretary of the St. Ives Society of Artists. Now Secretary of the new Penwith Society of Arts in Cornwall.

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